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The Shape of Things

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THE TIDE IN THE SUPREME COURT BATTLE is turning in the President's favor. Those who doubt his strength should read Paul Ward's dispatch in this issue. And those who fear it should read our editorial.

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P. J. PHILIP'S HYPOTHESIS, WIRED TO THE New York *Times* from Paris, that Germany and Italy are about to withdraw from Spain does not make sense. We prefer James M. Minifie's more realistic suggestion in the *Herald Tribune* that Germany and Italy have struck a bargain to allow Mussolini a "free hand in Spain" while Germany turns to Austria and Czecho-Slovakia. Anne O'Hare McCormick, who knows more of what is in Mussolini's mind than do most foreigners, tells the *Times* readers that "in private Mussolini does not pretend to be fighting the red menace." If Mussolini really intended to retire with only a few mining concessions, one wonders why he went into Spain at all. It was after signing the Anglo-Italian "gentlemen's agreement" that he sent tens of thousands of troops to Spain and boasted that his men won the Battle of Malaga. Mr. Philip offers no explanation of why the Duce should suddenly have changed his tactics. Our doubts about Mr. Philip's interpretation are increased when he says that Russia too "has lost interest" in Spain because "the effort to establish communism among the Spaniards is not going to succeed." When Mr. Philip speaks of Russia's loss of interest he does not know what he is talking about.

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CONTRARY TO MR. PHILIP'S VIEW, WHICH allowed the *Times* headline to say, "Powers Will Drop Neutrality to Let Franco Win," M. Blum is subject to tremendous pressure to end the farce of neutrality and help the Spanish government. His warning to Italy that he will not tolerate an "open invasion of Spain" was in response to this pressure. But he must reckon with England, and England is playing a complicated game. Powerful elements in British politics prefer Franco to Caballero. Louis Fischer wired *The Nation* from Valencia on January 10 that he "would not be surprised to see a move to eliminate Hitler and Mussolini followed by a [British] attempt to democratize Franco" in order to make his cause palatable to British public opinion. This would be the ideal British solution, but it must not yet be mistaken for a reality.

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THERE IS NOBILITY AMONG LABOR SPIES. WE do not refer to the fact that "finks" are also known as "nobles." We are thinking of the officials of the Pinkerton National Detective Agency, who, according to their counsel, will not reveal the names of operatives because they "cannot find it in their consciences to let these men down." That will be a comfort to workers who have been "hooked" and let down by the king of the Pinkertons and his nobles. We doubt whether even the Pinkerton operative as he slides bright-eyed and sharp-eared through the interstices of industry will sleep much better for the reassurance. Meanwhile it is interesting to note some of the things the Pinkertons found it in their consciences to do. They spied on Edward McGrady, Assistant Secretary of Labor. They "got around" a Wisconsin law so that their operatives could spy on workers at the Chevrolet Motor Car Company in a Wisconsin town. This, indeed, was a small favor to perform for General Motors, considering that that corporation bought $839,764 worth of assorted espionage from Pinkerton in the eighteen months preceding July 31, 1936. It is quite apparent that the Pinkertons will take any assignment, including the White House. No Congressman can fail to support the request of the La Follette committee for a new and generous appropriation.

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MAGISTRATE HENRY H. CURRAN IS TO BE congratulated for acquitting James T. Farrell and "A World I Never Made" of the charges of obscenity. We found his decision a delightful discourse on life and literature. It belongs with Judge Woolsey's judicial masterpiece on "Ulysses."

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TALK OF A LOAN TO GERMANY IS CURRENT still despite the enormous obstacles in the way. Among these are the Johnson Act, forbidding loans to European defaulting countries, Germany's dismal record on past loans, and American hostility to the Nazi regime. Yet Chairman Pittman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was quoted in the *Wall Street Journal* on January 20 as favoring American financial aid to Germany, and several big American bankers have made similar statements. There are persistent rumors that Sir Walter Runciman's visit to the White House had a German loan as one of its purposes. In fact, England has been the spearhead of the whole movement. A sign of this is the formation in London of a firm called Compensation Brokers, Ltd., for the purpose of extending raw-material credits to Germany. Great Britain holds a larger stake in Germany today than any other European country—a half-billion-dollar stake in short-term commercial debt that is tied up under the standstill agreement. That may be adequate reason for British pro-Nazism. What we resent is the attempt by British economists to sell America the idea that unless Hitler is helped with raw materials he will be driven into war. On the contrary, Germany cannot go to war *unless* it obtains food and raw materials financed by American capital.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TRANSMITTING to Congress the report of the Great Plains Committee is academically unexceptionable. He grasps the real problem and outlines the real solution in terms of the cooperation of federal, state, regional, and local agencies. We anxiously await the project of law that is to transmit this excellent theory into action. It is possible that after the scourging of the drought the state and local governments will be ready to join in such a cooperative enterprise, even though the indicated relocation of population will mean the abandonment of hope for many villages and towns formerly dominated by inveterate boosters. But there is no time to be lost. Sooner or later we shall have a series of years of fair rainfall, and the sentiment of the prairies will turn against any kind of planned use of land that does not permit the maximum production of wheat and the maximum of grazing.

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PRESIDENT CARDENAS OF MEXICO HAS succeeded in opening the Catholic churches of the province of Vera Cruz after a dramatic but brief struggle with Miguel Aleman, governor of the province. Contrary to the popular impression, Cárdenas has always sought reconciliation with the church. It was largely through his efforts that the Gold Shirts, semi-fascist bands which sought popularity through anti-Catholic terrorism much as the Nazis utilized anti-Semitism, were outlawed and crushed. In important sections of the country, including Mexico City, complete freedom of worship has always existed. Cárdenas has constantly sought to enlarge this area by refusing to enforce the restrictions on worship embodied in federal law. But until this week he has not dared interfere in the provinces, where the working-class and progressive elements in the population are most firmly anti-Catholic. It would be pleasant to believe that his act was in response to a definite pledge by the Catholics to refrain from political activity, but it appears much more like a bid on the part of Cárdenas for Catholic support in the event of a military revolt.

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NATIONAL SHARE-CROPPERS WEEK WILL BE celebrated from March 1 to 7. Meanwhile it is well to have the report of the Farm Tenancy Committee, which is in many respects a hopeful document. In recommending the creation of a new agency built along the lines of the Resettlement Administration, it avoids the danger of placing the tenants at the mercy of an unsympathetic Department of Agriculture. The recommendation that arbitration committees be set up in the various states to settle disputes between landlords and tenants is at least a recognition that share-croppers and tenants have legal rights which should be defended. Similarly, the suggestion that states repeal their laws making it a misdemeanor for tenants to quit their contracts is excellent, although there still remains the task of getting the states to act. But the proposal to solve the basic problem by allowing tenants to buy farms from the government with forty

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years to pay is pitifully inadequate. It was suggested by one member of the committee that $10,000,000 would be needed annually for 3,000,000 tenants—about $3 per family per year. And even for those who get the land, the benefit will be dubious. A small plot may support a family in good years, but the small farmer, lacking mechanized equipment, cannot compete on equal terms with the large landowner. In bad years he gets into debt or starves. Larger units, cooperatively owned, which would permit diversification of crops and the full use of mechanized aids, would seem the only real solution.

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ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL CARTEL WAS born when an agreement was recently concluded in Tokyo between the American Cotton Textile mission and representatives of the Japanese cotton-cloth manufacturers. On a yardage basis Japanese shipments are only 1 per cent of our total domestic production of cotton goods. But their exports are growing rapidly, and the price difference between their cheaper products and ours presents a pressing problem. The Japanese agreed at Tokyo to limit their exports to a fixed yardage during the next two years, it being assumed that the higher prices resulting from the agreement would make up for the loss in volume. America has had ample experience with other cartels—in aluminum, chemicals, copper, nitrates, and rayon. In each case prices have been raised to an uneconomic level. The consumer's last protection—the competition of cheaper foreign imports—is now stripped from him in yet another industry. The problem is a difficult one to solve. But one thing we may be clear about. A private trade association should not take it upon itself to decide what imports the United States is to have.

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CHARLES SEYMOUR WAS SURPRISED WHEN the Yale Corporation selected him to be president of Yale University. We are less so. He had often been mentioned for the post, along with Dean Furniss of the Graduate School, Professor Rogers of the Law School, and President Hutchins of Chicago, and he had generally been conceded the inside track. He comes of the American intellectual elite, who have always supported the holders of economic power. His great-uncle and his great-great-grandfather were both presidents of Yale. He was an intimate of Colonel House, participated in the Versailles fiasco, and since then as a historian has interpreted America's entrance into the war in legalistic rather than economic terms. He comes into a position of great influence and responsibility at a time when the discussion of the causes of America's entrance into the last war will for some years have an immense bearing upon America's entrance into the next. Thorstein Veblen once wrote a brilliant book called "The Higher Learning in America: A Memorandum on the Conduct of the Universities by Business Men." There is nothing in Provost Seymour's career which makes him from such a point of view an unsafe choice.

The Automobile Victory

THE COMMITTEE for Industrial Organization and the United Automobile Workers of America have won an important victory, though the settlement was fitted with face-saving devices to provide all concerned—including the unhappy press—with easy exits from sundry diehard positions. General Motors can deny that it has given the U. A. W. sole bargaining power in twenty plants, but the union has the guaranty of General Motors—to Governor Murphy—that for six months the company will not negotiate with any other group in the twenty struck plants without consulting the Governor, and the union recognizes that guaranty as practical recognition. The agreement to withdraw the Gadola injunction renders the first legal offensive against the sit-down null and void, and establishes that device as accepted strategy in labor struggles. Strikers are to be reinstated without discrimination, and what is even more important, unionists are to be allowed to wear their buttons in the plants, thereby making espionage unnecessary.

The terms of the settlement fit neatly into the context of Benjamin Stolberg's article (page 203), which was written just before the peace was signed. We refer our readers to his illuminating analysis of the play of forces, economic and political, which produced the C. I. O.'s first major treaty with mass-production industry.

This first victory will no doubt come to seem slight as well as historic. Its importance for the present can best be appreciated by reflecting upon the state of organization in the automobile industry just a year ago. It is in this light also that labor will judge the preposterous and treacherous statements of William Green, whose sabotage of unionization in the automobile industry started with the Great Sell-Out in 1934 and continued until he and his henchmen lost control a few months ago. His attacks on the C. I. O. at this juncture confirm Mr. Stolberg's statement that from now on the A. F. of L. executive council will function in the labor movement mainly as a breaker of strikes.

As we have indicated, the six months' clause of the automobile settlement is the crucial one. It means that the U. A. W. has a free hand to complete its organization without the interference of such company-inflated dragons as the Flint Alliance; and it has won sufficient prestige in the offensive just concluded to make its conquest relatively easy. The fact that Flint, queen city of the General Motors kingdom, was faced with a serious relief problem when the strike was only three weeks old is eloquent evidence of the kind of security the "loyal" automobile worker has enjoyed.

We congratulate Mr. Lewis on his generalship; but we reserve our warmest greetings for the workers' army in the automobile towns. According to competent observers they conducted their first major battle with a discipline and efficiency worthy of far more experienced unionists.

Mr. Knudsen, who appears to be something of a worker himself, can now "have peace and make motor cars." Steel is next.

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Neutrality Makes Wars

NEUTRALITY is frequently regarded as a means of preventing wars. This gives it its popular appeal. A simple common-sense analysis, however, must show that neutrality leads to war.

Historians of the first World War agree that if Foreign Minister Edward Grey of Great Britain had made it clear in July, 1914, that England would aid an attacked France, Germany might not have opened hostilities. The possibility of British neutrality encouraged the Kaiser. In exactly the same way the hope of American neutrality will encourage a potential aggressor.

If Germany were certain that England and America would remain aloof from the next international struggle, war would perhaps be upon us already. The chief and unchanging purpose of Nazi foreign policy is to neutralize Great Britain. With London neutral and Washington indifferent, France or any other victim of Germany would be at the mercy of a sudden offensive.

Such a neutrality as is advocated by the American isolationists has been Hitler's greatest hope. He rejects collective security. Instead of wanting to have all countries guarantee the peace, he urges that when hostilities break out between two states "the other nations withdraw at once from both sides." Hitler insists on the "localizing of smaller conflicts." He regards this as the essence of complete neutrality. Only the aggressor and the attacked fight. The others sit and watch. Germany marches into Czecho-Slovakia. Russia, France, and England remain neutral. Germany wins the war. Next Germany violates Poland. The powers maintain an Olympic passivity. France's turn would be next and then England's. Neutrality followed to its natural and logical conclusion means the end of international law and the collapse of diplomacy. It is wind in the sails of aggressors.

Hitler advocates neutrality because he wants to pave his way to military victory. And American pacifists advocate neutrality because they do not understand this and the other realities of the world situation. They see the formal side and think there is nothing more to it. They think neutrality will keep us out of war.

If we examine the latest crisis in international affairs we shall see how fallacious is the entire theory of effective neutrality. France, England, the United States, and the small powers are all neutral with respect to Spain. The result is that Germany and Italy can be as active as they please and actually send in troops to capture Spanish cities. The Soviet aid to the legal Spanish government has not caused the conflict to spread.

Suppose Great Britain, France, Czecho-Slovakia, the Scandinavian countries, Russia, and the United States, all sympathized with democratic Spain and wanted it to win. That would be enough to force Germany and Italy to retire. Germany is weak from a social, financial, economic, and, relatively, even from a military standpoint. Mussolini's fervor for German domination in Spain is not excessive. A firm diplomatic stand by the present neutrals would suffice to expel the aggressors and achieve real neutrality. The present partial neutrality vis-a-vis Spain has fostered fascist aggression.

A notice by the great powers for Germany and Italy to get out of Spain would not lead to international war. Those two countries took a chance because they had learned to know the flabbiness of democratic diplomacy. Together they are as nothing against the united forces of non-fascist governments. If they were made to feel that the others meant it, they would listen. But they despise and laugh at the non-interventionists. Non-intervention is neutrality, and non-intervention has been Hitler's and Mussolini's windfall. To scrap neutrality is not to catapult all into war. It is to bring peace by proving to the fascists that they cannot get away with their aggressive acts.

Early in January France was frightened by suspicious German activity in Morocco. Paris rapped on the table, rapped hard, and within twenty-four hours Hitler made a statement disavowing any intention of digging himself into Morocco. Today France may be poised for similar decisiveness in the whole Spanish problem. Germany and Italy have already sent to Spain too many troops for the comfort of the French People's Front. France will not act without Britain. This means that it will have to overcome English obstructions. But if both countries do move against Italian-German aggression in Spain, they can end the civil war soon. Similar situations would arise very seldom for the United States, but an unneutral America could, without moving a single man or gun, work for peace and social progress.

The Court and Fascism

THE tory hysteria over the court issue surpasses even the memorable hysteria of Mark Sullivan and Mrs. Preston Davie during the campaign. All Mr. Roosevelt's old enemies are at him again—the Liberty Leaguers and their lawyers, the public-utility barons, the hirers of spies, the big industrialists who own the newspapers. To be sure, they are staying in the background. They find it better policy to leave the center of the stage to conservative Democrats and to liberals like Borah and Norris. About the Glasses and the Baileys and the Kings and the Clarks we are not worried. Their opposition does honor to Roosevelt. But for liberals like Norris and Wheeler to join them shows the density of the smoke screen which the press has raised, and betrays the basic liberal confusion over the issue.

The liberal objections to the President's proposal take a variety of forms. On the radical extreme it is argued that it does not go far enough and does not really remove the obstruction of judicial power. We agree, but as we pointed out in our editorial last week, this is an "all or nothing" position which plays into the hands of the tories. A good solution for such liberals is to tie their support of the President's proposal to a movement for a constitutional amendment.

On the other extreme there are the liberals who feel

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that the President goes too far in his assault on the judicial power. This is variously phrased. The President, we are told, is seeking to "pack" the court. Also, he is attacking judicial independence. Also, he is insulting old age. Most of these views are based on a hazy notion, which is utterly untrue, that the President is adopting an unconstitutional method. And those who see that the President's proposal would offer a speedy and constitutional solution insist nevertheless that it is *psychologically* a step toward fascism and dictatorship. For, they argue, if Mr. Roosevelt can accustom the people to such an assault on the judicial power, what may not another President accustom them to in the future?

The issue of the Supreme Court and fascism should be faced frankly. Dictatorship involves the substitution of personal government for a government of laws. Its soil is economic confusion and governmental deadlock. Its method is a ruthless scrapping of constitutional provisions and the use of force to override the popular will. Its object is to smash the democratic institutions which stand in the way of the ruling plutocracy.

There is not the slightest sign of such a dictatorship in Mr. Roosevelt's proposal. On the contrary, we regard it as one of the necessary steps in blocking the road to fascism. The most sharply *personal* government we have had has been government by judiciary—a personal government in the sense that it has allowed a few men to read their own social and economic views into the Constitution. The soil of economic chaos out of which fascism grows has been amply supplied by the court's refusal to allow national action for economic control. The most serious governmental deadlock in the last two years of crisis has been that between representatives of the people on the one hand and a group of justices appointed for life on the other. The real philosophy of fascism is the philosophy that has breathed through the opinions of Justices McReynolds and Roberts.

Let the liberals remove the tory-made blinders from their eyes. The issue *is* one of democracy versus a possible fascism. But the side of Congress and the President is the side of democracy.

Love from All

THE era of good feeling, after a curiously elusive career, has at last received encouragement. We refer to the advertisement of Morris Ernst's book "The Ultimate Power" which appeared in the *Times* one morning last week. It was a statement signed by fourteen well-known publishers "heartily recommending" the book of a rival firm and adding that "whereas we, individually, may not agree with any or all of Mr. Ernst's conclusions, we consider it a timely and important work." Now here is a new spirit inaugurated by Doubleday, Doran, publishers of "The Ultimate Power," which, if widely used, would soften the edge of fratricidal strife and breathe new sweetness into a crabbed world.

For example, in the midst of all the current turmoil a statement to the press such as the following would have a soothing influence: "We, the undersigned, wish to express our entire confidence in Mr. Franklin Delano Roosevelt. After all, he is only fifty-five and doesn't know any better. *Signed,* the Chief Justice and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court, and the New York *Herald Tribune.*"

A little touch of friendliness will do much to heal old wounds and lay the foundations for a more brotherly feeling in the future. A real beau geste would be a notice to this effect: "Fisher No. 1 and Fisher No. 2 present their compliments to Messrs. Sloan, Knudsen, du Pont, du Pont, du Pont, and du Pont, and to Mr. John L. Lewis, Governor Murphy, Madam Secretary Perkins, and the National Guard and request the pleasure of their company at a dinner on the premises at half after eight o'clock. Black tie. N.B., bring your own drinks."

We might also recommend that Eugene O'Neill, Philip Barry, George Kaufman, Marc Connelly, and others, instead of sulking in their tents, write a friendly note to Noel Coward and Maxwell Anderson along these lines: "Look, boys, enough is enough. Nine plays for one of you and three for the other, all running at the same time, begin to look like you're establishing a monopoly of Broadway. After all, there is such a thing as the Sherman Anti-Trust Act."

Nor need the spread of good-will be limited to this country. It is the season of happy sentiment, and this could be taken advantage of to improve international relations. In some such fashion:

TO JOE STALIN

Through with all our past dissemblin',
Lovesick hearts, we hail the Kremlin.
Echo sounds from Rome to Rhine,
Comrade, be our Valentine.

FROM BENITO, ADOLF, AND PIUS XI.

Indeed, conditions abroad provide many splendid opportunities for the exercise of the Doubleday, Doran goodwill treatment. For instance, "A Manifesto to the Communist Red Army of China. We are miserable sinners unworthy of the trust and hope placed in us by the Chinese people. In deepest humiliation we admit we have failed in our duty and made example of our weaknesses and trespasses. Our only consolation is that perhaps you are no better than we are. *Signed,* Generals Chiang, Chang, Feng, Cheng, Yang, Wang, Ho, and Hu."

Or we suggest the following letter: "Dear Mrs. Simpson: We wonder if you would care to accept an offer, accompanied by suitable remuneration, to deliver a course of lectures through the medium of the Broadcasting Company on 'Homemaking in England.' Cordially yours, Stanley Baldwin, Prime Minister; Cosmo Gordon Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury; Sir John Reith, President of B. B. C."

Or how about a telegram addressed to Premier Largo Caballero, Madrid. "Having a wonderful time stop wish you were here. *Signed,* Franco, Mola, Quiepo de Llano."

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WASHINGTON WEEKLY

BY PAUL W. WARD

Roosevelt Will Win

Washington, February 14

IN THE welter of debate and speculation over Roosevelt's plan for giving the Supreme Court a blood transfusion, one vital thing seems rapidly to be dropping out of sight. This is the fact that Mr. Roosevelt is going to get what he wants. His mathematics may have to undergo some changes. The number of justices may not be increased to fifteen and the retirement age may have to be pegged a bit higher than seventy. But when all the shouting and the tumult dies, the nation will find that Roosevelt has at last achieved his objective.

Already the tide has begun to run strongly in Roosevelt's favor. The flow of protest letters on embossed stationery has begun to peter out, and the folks who really elected the present Congress are beginning to be heard from. And they will be heard from in increasing numbers now that Senator La Follette has gone on the air in defense of the President's proposal and has been followed by that wily orator, Attorney General Cummings. As soon as the situation is ripe, Roosevelt himself will go to the country on the issue, and then there will be nothing left to do but see which of the justices decides to be lead-off man on the retirement list. Organized labor this past week began bringing up its batteries in Roosevelt's support, and now that John L. Lewis is back from the General Motors war there will be some effective cannonading from that salient. The farm organizations, beautifully disciplined by Secretary Wallace, also began this past week to move their battalions up from the rear. In another week or two the success of Roosevelt's program in the House will be past doubt. Only the Senate will remain as a battleground, and there the battle is already half won. One young sage who sits in the Senate press gallery summed up the situation precisely when he said, "It's the lawyer in the Senators that turns them against the President's plan and it's the politician in them that makes them for it, and, Brother, there's more politician in them than lawyer."

This was just another way of saying that most of the Senators know, even as you and I, that the people to whom they must look for reelection snicker at senility in high places and have none of the awful respect for courts and judges that John W. Davis, Newton D. Baker, Dave Reed, Herbert Hoover, Moo-cow Borah, and Carter Glass affect to have. Even the tories so piously ranting in defense of the Supreme Court's sanctity are completely aware that the electorate is not on their side. Their desperate efforts to keep the Liberty League and Alf Landon out of the fight are a part of that realization. It takes something worse than a knave and less than a fool to forget that from the republic's beginnings judges have been suspect with the men and women who labor for a living. It takes no masterly rhetoric from a President to persuade organized labor that judges are all too human; union men and women and the non-union men and women who work beside them have built up through personal experience the doctrine that the courts are "with the corporations." Nor is it an exclusively proletarian doctrine. Those very Nestors of the bar who now assail the President for treating the Supreme Court realistically would fire any junior member of their law firm who failed to choose a "friendly" court for trial of an important case. Every practitioner before the Supreme Court begins his argument with an unspoken assumption that nothing he can say will turn certain of the justices there against his client or win others over to his side.

These notions are so widely held that it is hard to see how defenders of the status quo can hope to defeat Roosevelt's plan by a resort at this late date to sanctification of the courts and deification of the men who earn their livings in them. Their efforts to do so can only play into the President's hands. As in the campaign of 1936, he has only to sit back and let his enemies win for him, and if he were more or less a gentleman than he is, he already would be installing in the White House offices a battery of stenographers sending out thank-you letters to all those publishers and high-priced shysters who have invoked the shibboleths and alignments of 1936 in another attempt to lick him. What truth there is in their argument cannot prevail against what most of the electorate regard as a greater truth: that most of the judges of our courts do not belong on the bench. And the truth is on Roosevelt's side.

The important thing for liberals, radicals, and progressives to seize upon is that, if the scareheads of the press and the thunder of the tories frighten them into unqualified support of the President's program, they will have lost another grand opportunity. It is the opportunity to pry out of Roosevelt as a price for their support a pledge committing him to fight for an amendment to the Constitution to safeguard the public will against the prejudices of the future Supreme Court majority. The opportunity will last only so long as there is an element of uncertainty about the outcome of his fight for power to remold the court. I think it is big enough at the moment to allow not only a constitutional-amendment pledge to be obtained but also some definite commitments on new legislation. That legislation must encompass more than a few frowsy enactments with respect to minimum wages and maximum hours. There must be a frontal attack on the corporate devices by which prices are jacked up so that the wage-earner's share in the fruits of his labor remains stationary.

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The C. I. O. Moves On

BY BENJAMIN STOLBERG

Washington, February 9

THE Committee for Industrial Organization was conceived in the American Federation of Labor convention in San Francisco in 1934. And in spite of all the abortive efforts of Drs. Green, Frey, Woll, and Hutcheson it was born in Washington in November, 1935. It started out with ten unions and a little over a million members. Today it has fifteen unions, though two of them are affiliated only through their officers, and it is rapidly approaching a membership of two million. Numerically it is almost as large as the A. F. of L., 25 per cent of whose membership exists only on paper. It has profoundly stirred the working masses. And it is shaking the basic industries.

I

I doubt whether any of us—labor leaders or students and reporters of labor—emotionally appreciated the psychological forces which the mere change in the formal organization of labor from craft separatism to industrial unionism would release. To be sure, we have long had some industrial unions, the United Mine Workers and the two great needle trades. But they were merely encysted in the body of craft unionism. The most remarkable thing in modern American labor history is that John L. Lewis and Sidney Hillman and David Dubinsky have gone off their "jurisdictional" reservations and set out to organize other workers than their own. They are now thinking and acting in terms of American labor as a whole—economically, politically, and socially. This new industrial-union drive means the organization of vast masses of workers in technologically automatized industries, workers who have borne the brunt of the depression and who are socially angry if not personally class conscious. In short, the very form of the organizational drive of the C. I. O. has released a militancy such as American labor has never known in its history.

Not that American labor had never been militant. Nothing but militancy ever organizes labor. The A. F. of L. in the eighties and nineties, the Wobblies in the early part of this century invariably organized workers through militancy. But when they lost a strike, the leaders could always afford to disappoint the rank and file because the issues involved were local and limited. The A. F. of L. bureaucrats went back to their offices; the Wobblies went back to their dreams. You can afford to lose a melee in guerrilla warfare. You cannot afford to lose a campaign in a modern war. During the second half of its existence the A. F. of L. invariably dropped the strikes it failed in. It just pulled out. There were always enough dues-paying members to support the hierarchy. And the strikes they called and dropped were limited to the personnel they let down. But when you pull a strike in steel or in automobiles, then you affect both these industries and many others besides. You risk interfering with the business cycle and antagonizing large sections of public opinion. And you endanger the interlocking directorates of General Motors and the House of Morgan. You are not stepping on a cat; you are pushing a lion around. And you have to be ready for a fight.

The leaders in the automobile strike could not be other than intransigent because they could not let down the rank and file without a complete smash-up. That is why they repudiated the Lansing agreement when General Motors broke it by announcing that the company would deal with the Flint Alliance, its own stooge. The A. F. of L. would have accepted this breach of faith as a "victory." The C. I. O. repudiated the agreement because multiple representation is impossible under industrial unionism.*

This new militancy, of course, has its dangers. Probably the greatest internal difficulty of the C. I. O. will lie in the need to discipline without quenching the militancy of the workers. The strength of the sitdown lies in the fact that its spirit is catching. And its danger to labor lies in the same fact. Without strong union discipline a sitdown may be started at any time by a group of hot-headed workers, or by a nest of stool pigeons. It can be used at any moment to sabotage contractual relations after a strike has been settled. Hence the new rule in the automobile union that there must be no sitdown strike without express permission from the local executive committee.

The automobile strike was not a runaway, but there is no doubt that the C. I. O. prefers to go ahead as it has done in steel. In that industry the C. I. O. has proceeded with a powerful, militant, yet cautious organization campaign, sucking into itself the company unions and organizing some 80,000 workers whose membership cannot be doubted. All along, of course, the C. I. O. has been busily and effectively organizing in rubber, in automobiles, in the oil fields. The U. A. W. has silent agreements with Chrysler, Studebaker, Nash, White, Pierce-Arrow. It has effectively broken the hold of Father Coughlin over the workers in automobiles. But I doubt whether it was quite ready for the strike in General Motors. That the strike was not a complete runaway is indicated by the fact that the men waited until two days before the inauguration of the new Democratic governor, who owed his election to the labor vote. Still, the national officers would probably have preferred to wait a little longer.

It was at this point that the splendid courage and masterful strategy of John L. Lewis came into play. The

*Though it is couched in face-saving terms, the six months' guaranty by General Motors to Governor Murphy for all practical purposes grants sole recognition in twenty plants.

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A. F. of L., of course, would have let the workers down. Lewis stepped right in and took hold of the situation. He didn't just follow; he led. Nothing ever loses a strike as hopelessly as letting workers down. Lewis's action was not motivated by stubbornness, as the public was led to believe after the collapse of the Lansing agreement. It was sheer skill which kept him every moment in control of the strike situation. For the initial organization of the basic industries does not permit the alternative of drift or mastery. Only control is permissible.

II

The drive for industrial unionism is bound to render American labor ever more conscious politically. It was during the NRA that the progressive labor leaders realized that the old craft structure and the non-partisanship of the A. F. of L. were leading nowhere. To be sure, American labor could not jump from complete non-partisanship into direct political action. Nor would it have been wise to form an independent labor party which could not influence national and local office-holders during the crucial period of industrial organization. And so what happened was that labor formed the left wing of the Democratic Party, contributed to the victory of Roosevelt, and *definitely elected* all those Democratic governors who won out in ordinarily Republican industrial states. There is not the least doubt that they elected the Democratic administrations in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Indiana. Governor Earle of Pennsylvania is extremely sympathetic to the steel drive. Governor Townsend of Indiana made the sheriff of Anderson, during the Auto-Lite strike, fire a number of deputized gunmen and swear in sixty union men instead. And Governor Murphy of Michigan, in spite of his close connections with big business, has handled the General Motors strike with kid gloves. None of these governors elected by labor likes the idea of calling out the National Guard to shoot down workers who elected them. Indeed, the comparative bloodlessness of the major strikes these last two years has been amazing. Moreover, when Lewis turned the heat on Roosevelt with the demand that he back labor in the automobile strike, he was far from committing a "diplomatic blunder." He knew mighty well that Roosevelt could not afford to ignore him because the Democratic National Committee cannot afford to ignore him.

Lewis is shrewdly coordinating Labor's Non-Partisan League with the whole industrial development. The new executive vice-president of the League, Eli L. Oliver, put it very succinctly: "We have now about 50 progressives in Congress. And when we have some 125 we may decide to go in for a farmer-labor party." And when that day comes, labor may have a lot of sheriffs elected on its own ticket as well. To be sure, one of the dangers of labor's growing political power is that of increasing government intervention. But as Paul Ward pointed out in *The Nation,* "a labor movement committed to reliance on the federal government can ill afford to balk at this point." The old A. F. of L. anarchist position of the less government the better becomes ever more unrealistic because the conditions which made such a position tenable are gone.

III

The relation of the C. I. O. to the A. F. of L. and to the company union is largely one of diplomacy. The upper bureaucracy of the A. F. of L. cannot be won; you cannot win a man out of his job. The problem then is to wean away the rank and file in the craft unions from the reactionary top leadership, whose hold is confined to the most skilled and conservative trades. In this task the C. I. O. is succeeding very well. In fact, it is not an overwhelming task, because the lesser leadership and the rank and file in the regional bodies—city and state federations—are by and large sympathetic to the C. I. O. It is one thing for Bill Green and John Frey to encourage scabbing from their mausoleum in Washington. It is quite another thing for a city or state labor organization to encourage scabbing locally.

As for the company union, it is rapidly merging into the C. I. O. The whole C. I. O. drive is proving that big industry these last fifteen years has unwittingly been helping to prepare its workers, through the company union, for industrial organization. Company unions are falling into the lap of the C. I. O. like ripe apples.

IV

Since the World War big industry has used two weapons against labor organization. One was gangsterism and the other was company unionism. Gangsterism it usually farmed out, as the testimony before the La Follette committee is currently proving. The guerrilla bands of craft unionists were met by the Hessian troops of strike-breaking agencies wherever a skirmish occurred. The company-union movement was a highfalutin personnel-management development manipulated by the same stooges, such as Vice-President Arthur Young of United States Steel, who hired spies and scabs. With these two weapons the A. F. of L.'s attempts to organize workers could usually be stopped.

Within this last year big industry has had to find new weapons to fight the mass movement of the C. I. O. Strike-breaking agencies have been relegated to the place of mere auxiliaries and the company-union regiments have been found most untrustworthy, since at the first opportunity they deserted to the enemy. What big business needs is to divide the working class. For this they found one means ready at hand: the oligarchy of the A. F. of L. And they invented another means in what may be called vigilante democracy.

Since the A. F. of L. hierarchy cannot fight the C. I. O. directly through workers whom it never organized, there is only one way left for it to fight—through sabotage. The A. F. of L. now is in the same disintegrating position as were the Knights of Labor in the late eighties, with one essential difference: the K. of L. never lent themselves to strike-breaking activities. The oligarchy of the A. F. of L. from now on can have no other major function. William Green called up Governor Murphy on February 7 and excitedly insisted that under no circumstances must the United Automobile Workers be recognized. Later, under pressure from countless labor bodies, the executive council announced its neutrality.

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There is every reason to believe that the General Motors strike in Atlanta, last November, was precipitated by an A. F. of L. organizer in an attempt to hurt the C. I. O. One of the most influential A. F. of L. organizers, with an enormous jurisdictional territory, told me that Green is now using his organizers exclusively for such tactics.

The other weapon of big industry is the organization of the least progressive elements among the workers under vigilante leadership, demanding "recognition" from the company and pretending that the legitimate union is trying to represent the workers against their will and interfering with their right to work. During the rubber strike in Akron a year ago a disreputable politician named Sparks organized a "law and order" league very similar to that which is now attempting to disrupt the automobile strike—the Flint Alliance under the leadership of an equally discredited politician, George Boysen, a former mayor of Flint and Buick paymaster. It would be foolish to deny that backward workers can be temporarily organized through these tactics, for such vigilante organizations have a factitious appearance of democracy.

V

In a little over a year the C. I. O. has changed significantly the relation of social forces in American industry. It is changing both the structure and the orientation of American labor. It is changing the tactics of big business in fighting labor. It is gradually killing off the A. F. of L. in all but the most craft-ridden industries. It is profoundly affecting our two major political parties. It is transforming the relation of government to industry.

All profound social change involves danger, and the deeper and more rapid the change the greater the danger. The C. I. O. is the most progressive and vital force in American life today. But you cannot release such a force in the very heart of American industry without raising up all the powers of reaction against it. The student of American labor cannot hope to understand our labor movement from now on without realizing that the mass industries cannot be organized without audacity—and they cannot be left unorganized. From now on American labor must live dangerously. Every situation is of a kind where the leadership must take chances. The sitdown is dangerous. The need for exercising increasing political pressure is dangerous. The need for exposing the A. F. of L. scabocracy without antagonizing its rank and file is dangerous. The mere fact that a strike in a basic industry is not a mere strike but an economic stoppage of vast consequences is dangerous. Even the victories of the C. I. O. will be dangerous, for it would be silly to suppose that the Liberty Leaguers who own our basic industries will yield without a desperate struggle.

John Lewis has been criticized in the public press and even by some friends of labor for being too stubborn, for lacking diplomacy, for an almost reckless audacity. In reality his behavior so far has been extraordinarily shrewd. Lewis is not a fool who loves a fight for its own sake. His whole history in the United Mine Workers is one of great circumspection. The fact is that Mr. Lewis is being forced by the exigencies of the situation to drive ahead quickly and powerfully. In the automobile strike, for instance, he was afraid of one thing only, and that was of having the leadership left behind by an aroused rank and file which could not function without leadership. Mr. Lewis understands the dangers far better than any of his critics. And the men around him submit to his leadership not because he is the boss, but because he does understand.

Floods Can Be Controlled

BY JAMES RORTY

I

Knoxville, Tennessee, February 8

A WEEK ago when I was traveling on the edges of the flood area, riding on refugee trains, listening to the endless stories of flood victims, talking to fliers who had seen it from the air, I realized how impossible it is to convey either the abominable arrogance of a masterless river or the wretched terror of the people in its path. The planes don't fly high enough, the camera lens has too narrow a focus, the sounds that come over the radio are trivial, frivolous. How can one see, except in the mind's eye, that sudden muddy gulf opening from Pittsburgh to Cairo? How can one hear, except in imagination, the vast composite sigh with which thousands of ruined people acknowledge utter defeat?

Yesterday I stood underneath the Norris Dam, which at the moment was being permitted, gingerly, to spill some of its two million and a third acre-feet of stored water at the modest rate of 20,000 cubic feet per second. From the caldron at my feet to the top of the spillway was higher than Niagara: high, wide, and thick—all the dimensions are huge. Yet it did not *feel* big. Instead, it seemed neat, precise, perfect, like a de luxe toy. The Clinch, tributary of the Tennessee, has been a vicious, dangerous river in its time. Not now, I reflected. Not with that beautiful concrete collar around its neck.

Will it be possible to multiply and coordinate such victories until at last people who live and work beside the Ohio, the Mississippi, and their tributaries need no longer live in terror of flood warnings? Is a real solution of the problem of flood control possible? How much would it cost, and would it be worth the price?

I brought these questions to Knoxville, headquarters of the Tennessee Valley Authority. We, the people, have

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given millions to TVA with the object not merely of rehabilitating the Tennessee Valley but of obtaining nationally applicable answers to these very questions and to other related questions. Now, in the stricken aftermath of a great disaster, we want the answers, if any.

The accomplishment to date is impressive enough and easily demonstrable. Even a year ago Norris Dam cut three feet off the flood crest of the Tennessee at Chattanooga—enough to protect 5,000 homes that would otherwise have been flooded and save three-quarters of a million dollars. And when the water started to rise last month, the TVA engineers drove the Tennessee as a skilled chauffeur drives an automobile. An elaborate forecasting system, plus split-second time-control of the flood gates at Norris and Wheeler, twice prevented the flooding of the coffer dams at Pickwick Landing.

This, however, represents the smallest part of the TVA's actual and potential contribution. What we have got out of our investment in the TVA is not merely a partial, far from complete solution of specific local problems of water and soil control, navigation improvement, fertilizer production, power generation and distribution, but an adult, integrated grasp of *all* these problems in all their dimensions, plus a rigorous scientific procedure. The preceding sentence roughly paraphrases a statement of Dr. A. E. Morgan, chairman of the TVA board, whom I saw in Washington en route to Knoxville. It expresses, I think, the fundamental philosophy of the TVA triumvirate, to which all its members adhere despite current differences.

"When we first tackled the problem of the Miami River," said Dr. Morgan, "we thought levees were the answer—everybody thought so then. But we soon learned better. What you do is to write out the obvious solution first and all the other possible solutions in order. Then you start selecting, rejecting, combining. Usually you astonish yourself by the solution you finally arrive at, but that's it, just the same. On the Miami conservation project we used the whole repertory of control devices, with our main reliance on the reservoirs that had played no role at all in the first solution we projected. But it worked, and it's the only method that will work—for the Ohio, the Mississippi, the problem as a whole. The army abandoned the "levees only" doctrine after the 1927 flood. Today our best hope is that creative minds, with no vested interest in any doctrine, may work freely toward a real solution."

As I have already pointed out, a practicable solution of the flood problem must be expressed in economic, political, and engineering procedures. Let us first consider the engineering aspect.

A 100 per cent solution must insure protection against super-floods that may come only once in 50 years, and against super-super-floods that may come only once in 500 years. The highest flood level on record was established in 1792—probably by the coincidence of heavy rainfall and rapid run-off on all or many of the tributaries of the Mississippi. The next highest was in 1844, both before the building of levees. This year the rainfall was high in the Ohio basin but fortunately somewhat less on the Tennessee, upper Mississippi, Missouri, and other watersheds. Neither in 1792 nor in 1844 had deforestation or cultivation assumed anything like their present importance in causing erosion and rapid run-off. Are we to conclude, therefore, that the restoration of the forest and grass cover at the headwaters of streams is not sufficient to prevent floods? Yes, with important qualifications.

A. E. Morgan says: "Reservoir control is most effective with a relatively small number of large reservoirs on large streams. Small reservoirs on headwaters may be useful in some cases for local flood control or for other reasons, but they constitute about the most expensive and least effective method of control on large streams. It would be unfortunate if Congress should enter into a great program of building small reservoirs on small streams to control floods on large rivers. Forestation and increase of grassland are important in our national economy, but play relatively little part in the prevention of great floods on large rivers.

"If the proposed Gilbertsville Dam in the lower Tennessee River and a dam across the Ohio just above the mouth of the Tennessee had been built, the present flood would have been so controlled as largely to remove danger along the Ohio River from Paducah to Cairo and in the Mississippi below. The Norris Dam has done full service in the present flood. When the TVA dams are completed they will supply a large measure of flood control on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers."

Nothing in Dr. Morgan's statement would be objected to by the "up-streamers"—the advocates of heavy expenditure on reforestation and other erosion-control measures. But as he would be the first to admit, it presents only a part of the problem. And here enters the "other Morgan"—H. A., TVA's agricultural expert.

"Granting that a sudden, heavy rainfall will waterlog the forest or grass cover of even a properly protected slope so that a quick run-off and floods occur," says H. A. Morgan, "we must still give weight to the fact that a properly covered slope *will* absorb and hold gradual rainfall; that erosion-control measures, adequately applied, offer us the practical assurance that we can in this way both prevent many minor floods and also prevent some floods from becoming super-floods.

"Anyway, what are the major losses in any flood? Do they consist only of houses, factories, man-made structures damaged or destroyed? Not at all. The major loss is soil—plant food. Should we be more concerned with the Louisville cigarette factories and distilleries than with the soil necessary to grow the grain and tobacco out of which their products are manufactured? Isn't a thousand dollars' worth of soil worth just as much as a thousand-dollar building? Our experiments have shown that on the same slope and soil, receiving the same rainfall, plowed land loses 105 tons per acre every year and corn land 67 tons, whereas grass and alfalfa lose only a little over half a ton. And you don't have to have a flood to lose this valuable soil. Ordinary rains do it. When you talk flood control, water control, you're also talking soil

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control. And when you're counting costs you'd better not forget the major costs—the year-in and year-out costs of soil erosion, flood or no flood, which no system of high dams, levees, or combination of the two will stop unless supplemented by adequate erosion-control methods."

II

Complete protection of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys against floods and super-floods is theoretically possible. All the TVA experts agreed on that although some of them, like W. A. Woodward, one of the ranking authorities in America in his field, muttered obstinately that we don't really know enough yet. We don't know, for example, how fast dams silt, given varying conditions of soil and rainfall. The TVA engineers, who suspect that silting has been much overemphasized, expect to find out more about this by means of the measured monuments they are placing in their dams. The TVA also expects to learn a lot about dam building from the records of the instruments it has buried in the concrete, which show the effects of heat and other factors. But even allowing for all the factors still to be determined, the job could be done. It would take between twenty-five and thirty years and cost—nobody knows precisely how much. Billions, certainly.

Would it be worth it? Here again the answer is yes. Yes, if we take ourselves seriously as a civilization that expects to preserve itself, and perhaps ameliorate slightly the ordeal of human life on our part of the planet. Yes, if and when we recognize that flood control and soil and water control are national problems and that only a national program planned and coordinated by federal agencies can solve them.

The floods, as A. E. Morgan remarked dryly, have amended the Constitution with respect to the power of the federal government to deal with some of these basic matters; in the lurid light of successive disasters we have more or less decided to dispense with legal formalities. But we'd better be sure about that if we really intend to tackle the problem seriously. The sordid spectacle of Mississippi and Louisiana farmers crossing the river and blowing up their neighbor's levees so that *his* fields, not theirs, would be flooded—such things are of recent memory.

We may have to blast something besides levees before the way is open to an honest, scientific attack upon the problem. I have in mind specifically an Associated Press dispatch I read on the train in which a new organization called the "United States Flood Control Federation" declared that it would oppose "any act which would remove from the corps of United States Army Engineers authority over flood-control works." Who and what is this federation, I wondered, and why this somewhat invidious enthusiasm for army engineers? Is it because TVA coordinates flood control, navigation improvement, erosion control, and soil conservation with *power production and distribution* and applies the income from power sales to the costs of this necessarily integrated job? Is it possible that the private utilities are favoring the United States Flood Control Federation and its official line because the army just builds dams, the power product of which the private utilities would like to exploit? A complete program of flood control would cost many billions. Is the government to be stopped from paying part of the costs by selling the power its own dams generate?

A while back the army engineers, basing their estimates only on recorded flood damage on the Mississippi from Cairo down over a thirty-year period, declared that an expenditure of $450,000,000 designed to reduce the flood crests two feet, would be well justified. But figuring only physical damage, and ignoring both soil loss and human suffering, the floods of the past twelve months have cost the people of the Ohio and its tributaries about a billion dollars. If we put the flood losses in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys to date at $3,000,000,000, we should still be taking account only of damage to physical property, still ignoring soil loss—and the figure would be conservative.

Three billion dollars would build many dams and provide local flood protection in the form of levees. But it still would not solve the basic problem of America, a problem closely related to but transcending flood control: reorganization of our agricultural economy in terms of scientific conservation before the plant food of the nation washes and blows away from under us.

Let H. A. Morgan, TVA's agricultural expert, speak on this point. "We have eight major agricultural economies," says Mr. Morgan. "They are the cotton economy, the wheat economy, the corn economy, the pasture economy, the diversified economy, the dairy economy, the fruit and vegetable economy, the forest economy. In practically all these economies except the diversified economy what has happened, roughly, is that whether the farmer got good or bad prices for his crops—and they were usually bad prices—he was forced to operate his land in such a way as to destroy his basic capital, which was *plant food,* that is, certain irreplaceable elements in the soil. Of these phosphorus is today the most important. We need phosphorus to put cover crops on our eroded soil—legumes which restore the nitrogen and also lessen the run-off. That's why TVA is making phosphates at Muscle Shoals. That's why our known supply of phosphate rock is so tremendously important. We have barely enough for our own needs. To export it is suicidal.

"Assume that your guess is roughly accurate—that our recorded flood losses on the Ohio and Mississippi total at least three billions. Does that stagger you as much as the fact that in a single ordinary year at least three billion dollars' worth of soil washes down the rivers into the sea?

"Flood control, certainly. It can be done, and it must be done. But soil control is our basic problem. Nobody knows, of course, how much it would cost. But have we any choice? Every civilization stands or falls according to its ability to utilize and conserve intelligently the plant food in the soil that sustains life. We must tackle this problem or face the progressive and cumulative exhaustion of the physiographic base of our civilization."

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Mr. Aylesworth Moves Ahead

BY RUTH BRINDZE

THE news stories announcing that Merlin H. Aylesworth, for ten years president of the National Broadcasting Company, would sever his connection with the radio industry to become a member of the general management of the Scripps-Howard newspapers omitted several important details which should interest all students of success in business.

Mr. Aylesworth (he is Deac, short for Deacon, to his friends) has moved steadily from one important job into another. Six years after he was graduated from law school, he became chairman of the Colorado Public Utilities Commission. He kept this job for four years and then, having acquired considerable knowledge of utility operations, became one of the executives of the Utah Power and Light Company. But Mr. Aylesworth's special genius was too great to permit a single utility to monopolize it. A year after he had moved his headquarters to Salt Lake City he was appointed general manager of the National Electric Light Association, the propaganda organization of the Insulls and other utility leaders.

From the records of the Federal Trade Commission we learn that Mr. Aylesworth made good as manager of the N. E. L. A. His job was to arouse public sentiment against government ownership of utilities and to "educate" the public in the advantages of private control. Mr. Aylesworth had had no previous experience in handling publicity, but he proved that he had a flair for it. His methods were simple. He bought at bargain prices the integrity of college professors and newspapermen and through the press, textbooks, and classroom lectures "carried on the greatest peace-time propaganda campaign ever conducted by private interests in this country." At a conference of the Middle West Utilities Company in the autumn of 1923, he explained how easily and cheaply the services of the professors could be bought. He said:

> I would advise any manager here who lives in a community where there is a college to get the professor of economics, let us say, . . . interested in your problems. Have him lecture on your subject to his classes. Once in a while it will pay you to take such men getting $500 or $1,000 a year and give them a retainer of $100 or $200 for the privilege of letting you study with them. For how in heaven's name can we do anything in the schools of this country . . . if we have not first sold the idea of education to the college professors?

Some professors and colleges received more generous subsidies. The Harvard Business School, for example, received an annual subsidy of $20,000. The payments to the Fourth Estate were, on the whole, higher. But as Mr. Aylesworth declared at a meeting of the N. E. L. A. in Philadelphia in 1924: "Don't be afraid of the expense. The public pays the expense."

By 1926 the N. E. L. A. had an efficient chain of "information bureaus" throughout the country. Newspapers were regularly printing articles and even entire editorial pages written by the association's publicity men, and teachers were well supplied with the utilities' syllabuses. It was time for Mr. Aylesworth to move ahead.

The National Broadcasting Company had been organized by the Radio Corporation of America as a result of a patent deal between the R. C. A. and the Bell System. Who should be intrusted with the responsibility of directing the new chain? Owen D. Young, as head of the General Electric Company, knew of Mr. Aylesworth's success in the N. E. L. A. and nominated him for the post. In his announcement of the appointment Mr. Young said, "One of his major responsibilities will be to see that the operation of the National Broadcasting Company reflects enlightened public opinion."

The testimony before the Senate's Banking and Currency Committee in 1933 indicates that Mr. Aylesworth continued to buy enlightenment at bargain rates after he went into the broadcasting business. At his direct suggestion Halsey Stuart and Company, underwriters of Insull securities, retained Professor Nelson of the University of Chicago to act as their mouthpiece on the air. When Mr. Stuart was examined, the Senators were inquisitive:

> SENATOR REYNOLDS: What was the name of the "old counselor"? What was his name?
>
> MR. STUART: I ought to remember it. He is a professor of note at the University of Chicago.
>
> SENATOR REYNOLDS: How much did you pay him per week?
>
> MR. STUART: $50 a week.
>
> SENATOR REYNOLDS: Is he still at the university?
>
> MR. STUART: I think so. Of course, everything he delivered was written for him.
>
> SENATOR REYNOLDS: Who wrote it?
>
> MR. STUART: It was written in our office.

Several years before, Mr. Aylesworth had testified before a House committee that the "old counselor" was an actor chosen "because of his voice and not because of his banking intelligence." Apparently it was a role that almost anyone could perform.

Neither the Federal Trade Commission's report nor the other official evidence of Mr. Aylesworth's methods embarrassed the National Broadcasting Company or its president. He continued to head the largest network in the country until 1936, when he was "kicked upstairs" to become vice-chairman of the board of directors of the N. B. C. and president of the Radio Keith Orpheum, another of the Radio Corporation's subsidiaries. Now Floyd Odlum, of the Atlas Corporation, and Lehman Brothers have purchased control of the R. K. O. and a reorganization plan is before the court. Undoubtedly the Radio Corporation could find a place for Mr. Aylesworth with still another of its subsidiaries. But Mr. Aylesworth moves ahead.

His qualifications for a top-notch job with the anti-public-utility Scripps-Howard newspapers are thus a matter of public record. Mr. Aylesworth knows the newspaper business as only a propagandist for the special interests can know it.

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

HAVING recently heard Maude Royden make two fine addresses in behalf of the emergency peace campaign, I find myself dissenting more and more from the point she chiefly stressed—that we must do justice to the overcrowded, "have-not" countries by redistributing colonies or otherwise giving them direct access to raw materials. With all respect to this gallant and charming woman, it seems to me that those who say this cannot have thought through the implications of their proposal. In the first place, the suggestion is to take away some swag from those who have improperly acquired it, usually by rapine and wholesale murder, and to give it to somebody else. Those who support this proposal seldom speak of the populations which are thus to be handed over, or ask whether the natives wish to be ruled by this country or that. They are just so many cattle to be bandied about as the white man sees fit, precisely as populations were disposed of by the Treaty of Versailles, with the consequences we all know.

But leaving the natives for a minute, why should Italy and Germany be specially singled out among all the "have-nots" unless it is because they are dangerous to the peace of the world and extremely ugly customers? Certainly if any country needs a little help in the way of more territory and access to raw materials it is what is left of Austria, but Austria is small and not dangerous and therefore gets no consideration. It is only the size of Italy and Germany and their bullying and threats which make people suddenly so anxious to "see justice done them." Now obviously there are certain raw materials to which these countries never could get direct access, even if the dominant powers in Europe, France and England, wished to give them that help. They cannot get any part of Brazil, and it is from Brazil that the all-important manganese comes. It is probably not possible to give them territory in which large cotton or sugar crops can be raised, or in which there are important oil possibilities. Nature has been unequal in the distribution of its resources, and no amount of blackmailing by Italy and Germany can overcome that. As for those teeming populations, I should feel very much more sympathetic if it were not an undeniable fact that when they had colonies the Germans did not go into them in large numbers—only 24,000 Germans all told were in the colonies at the outbreak of the World War—nor did the Italians into theirs prior to the Ethiopian crime. Again, they have teeming populations because they want them, because they punish birth-control advocates and offer large rewards for increased families for military purposes, although they themselves admit that the economic conditions into which these children are to be born cannot afford them a reasonable basis of existence.

I have been stirred to these remarks by reading an article in *Das Neue Tage-Buch* by Erich Andermann, in which he recalls the events in German Southwest Africa which led to the uprising of January, 1904. I followed these occurrences at the time and called attention to them. Herr Andermann quotes from the official account published in 1906 by the Military Historical Division of the great General Staff. This is, therefore, not the word of "atrocity-mongers," or of "Jewish journalists." The author explains that there had to be a settlement of the case by military force: "No policy, however skilful, would have been able to head off this racial conflict." The only thing to do was to "use respect-creating force until the complete overthrow of the natives." The decisive battle is described in a letter written by Lieutenant Colonel von Beaulieu:

> For many kilometers along the Hamakari River were farm after farm which were the homes of many thousands of human beings and countless cattle. As far as our shells had reached they were transformed into a pile of ruins and everywhere obviously deserted in wild, headlong flight. . . . wounded, sick, and dying awaited in some corner of the kraals their fate. . . . The whole national wealth of the Herero people lay there along the main road unconditionally at our mercy. *The General had forbidden the killing of women and children, but for all the armed men who fell into the hands of our troops the last hour had struck.*

The report then tells how the rest of the Hereros were driven by the German troops into a sandy desert where there was not one drop of water and where they died of thirst. As the commanding general, Von Trotha, put it himself: "These half-starved and waterless groups are the last remnants of a nation which has ceased to hope for rescue or reestablishment." Even that was not enough. The official General Staff report goes on thus:

> The shutting off with iron vigor for many months of this sand desert ended the work of destruction. . . . The last gasps of the dying and the mad yells of the insane there ceased in the dignified silence of eternity. . . . The Hereros had ceased to be an independent people.

Incidentally, Herr Schacht, in his recent demand for colonies for Germany, promised that the new colonial policies of the Third Reich would be "much more energetic and much more thoroughgoing" than those of the Second Empire! Unquestionably the Hereros would vote their thanks to Maude Royden or to anybody else who would favor their return to the more energetic Germans of Hitler!

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

WHAT GOOD IS REVOLUTION?

BY M. E. RAVAGE

Paris

THE furor created by André Gide's "Retour de l'U.R.S.S."* seems at first astonishing. In a few weeks the little brochure has sold over a hundred thousand copies and has stirred up a tempest of debate fantastically out of proportion to its content or merit. Other writers have returned from the U. S. S. R. with reports at once profounder and more devastating to proletarian culture and socialist construction as practiced under the heirs of Lenin. Gide's fame as a novelist and traveler, great as that is, can be only part of the explanation. More pertinent are the one or two short passages of a book ("Pages de Journal") from the same pen published a little more than two years ago in which Gide proclaimed his solidarity with the Bolshevik revolution and his conviction that the goal pursued by the Soviet Union was the hope of a threatened and chaotic world. His journey sobered him, and his account of it is having a *succès de déception.*

Déception (disappointment) there surely has been. But what amazes the detached witness is the incapacity of both camps to perceive the primary fact that Gide abandons neither proletarian revolution as a way of salvation nor the Russian example. His strictures are addressed not to socialism, or even to the present leadership in the Kremlin, but purely and simply to certain departures from the original objective—to certain aberrations of Stalinism, if you like—or what appears to him to be such. That the non-conformist Marxists hail the publication with delight is easy to understand. But what the fascists and other foes of the Soviet Union find in the little book to crow over is a bit of a poser. There is nothing in its pages to suggest that Gide is about to join the Parti Populaire Français of Jacques Doriot. On the contrary, Gide remains more than ever convinced that socialism is the path of salvation; the achievements of the Russian Revolution seem to him, on the whole, admirable and convincing; and if there is any moral for the French proletariat in his observations, it is that they avoid the pitfalls and the snares of their Russian comrades.

Not much in all this for anti-Marxists to gloat over. But neither, it would seem to me, is there anything for revolutionists to lament and call names about, as *L'Humanité* and *Pravda* are now doing, still less to make them exert pressure—as I learn on good authority the French Communists did—in the hope of persuading the author to withhold his book from the public. Gide, to be sure, is not an orthodox Marxist. He never pretended to be. He has not subscribed—to judge from a letter to a friend after the publication of his "Pages de Journal"—either to the class struggle or to the materialist dialectic; and if now he declines to be restrained by the superstition that a revolutionary must hew to the "line," follow the leader, and for the rest keep mum, the party directorate can hardly be surprised.

On certain tendencies in the U. S. S. R. Gide cannot be said to mince his words. Perhaps the reason for that is that he hews to the line too firmly. "Was I mistaken at the outset?" he asks. "Those who have followed developments in the U. S. S. R. for barely a year past will decide whether it is I who have changed or the U. S. S. R., and by U. S. S. R. I mean the man who rules it. . . . Dictatorship of the proletariat, we were promised. We are a long way from it. Dictatorship, yes, of course; but dictatorship of a man, not of the united proletariat, not of the Soviets. It is as well not to be deceived; let there be no mistake about it: it is not this we wanted, Another step and we might even say that is exactly what we did not want."

His chief complaint is about the depersonalization of the individual. Economics and social reorganization he leaves to the experts. That in the "classless society" so widely heralded there is nearly as much inequality of income—the only kind that matters—as elsewhere, that clinging, wretched poverty remains an apparently permanent phenomenon in "the workers' fatherland," he is ready to accept and forgive. That is not his department. His province is the spirit. He had hoped to find in the Soviet Union a mankind liberated of servility and conformity, a race that held its head high and spoke its mind freely. But "I doubt whether in any other country today, be it in Hitler's Germany, the mind is less free, more servile, more fear-ridden [terrorized], more vassalized." Is this the land of revolution—"his patrie d'élection, his guide and model"?

A number of instances illustrate for Gide this curious deformation of the temper that but twenty brief years ago shook the world. When, at a gathering shortly after his arrival in Moscow, Gide made some comments on the Spanish civil war, everyone looked uncomfortable, everyone seemed to look to his neighbor for a cue. The party line had not been announced. Therefore "no one knew what to think on the question." Several days later the Politburo took its stand, and Gide's words were greeted with general enthusiasm. In the U. S. S. R. a great deal is made of "self-criticism." Gide in Paris admired it and the results it must have. "But I grasped that apart from denunciations and remonstrances (the soup in the refec-

* "Retour de l'U.R.S.S." By André Gide. Paris: Gallimard. 6 francs. The English translation will be published in this country by Alfred A. Knopf.

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tory is not cooked enough, or the reading-club hall is not swept properly) this self-criticism consisted in wondering whether this or that were or were not 'within the line.' The line itself is not discussed. What is discussed is whether such a work, such an act, such a theory is consistent with this sacred line. And woe to him who tries to push on farther."

Between Tiflis and Batum the Gide party paused at Gori, the little town where Stalin was born. It occurred to Gide that it might be courteous to wire a word of thanks to the new ruler of Russia for all the hospitality that had been shown him and his friends. He drew up the message: "Passing through Gori in the course of our wonderful journey I cannot refrain from addressing to you . . ." But that was as far as he got. The translator was scandalized. One could not say just "you" to Stalin. It would not be decent. One must add a flourish of some sort: "you, leader of the workers," or "you, master of peoples." There was nothing for it but to submit.

But there is more than mere fault-finding in the little book. On Russian youth, on industrial renovation, on the rest-and-culture establishments, and on a score of other achievements Gide has many an enthusiastic word to say. His praise is whole-hearted, warm, unreserved. And even where he is most severe, his tone is never captious. "My conviction," he says, in concluding his preface, "remains whole and unshaken that on the one hand the U. S. S. R. will conquer the grave errors which I am pointing out, that on the other—and this is more important—the mistakes of one country cannot possibly compromise the genuineness of a cause which is international and world-wide." Were I the editor of *L'Humanité* or the *Pravda,* I should have remembered the services that Gide has rendered to the cause both of the U. S. S. R. and of the world's proletariat, and that, his strictures notwithstanding, he still remains the friend and defender of both.

BOOKS

Lloyd George Sees It Through

WAR MEMOIRS OF DAVID LLOYD GEORGE. Volumes V and VI. Little, Brown and Company. Each Volume $3.

WHEN a man starts a new craft in his seventieth year, Mr. Lloyd George remarks in the preface to his concluding volume, he cannot become anything better than an amateur. This conspicuous amateur makes one specific claim for his Memoirs—namely, that apart from the official histories of the war they contain the most careful and richly documented account of the great conflict. I am not competent to assess the precise significance of the words "most careful" as used here, but it is undeniable that Mr. Lloyd George's achievement is remarkable. Six stout volumes, one million words (they might easily have been reduced by 20 per cent) —such is the chronicle of the war Prime Minister's Dolorous Way. Its literary quality, save in those chapters which recall the fighting speeches of a happier time, is not likely to be considered by most readers; but the book, we may assume, will receive attention in many lands for many years. That should suffice for the author by way of imponderable reward.

Mr. Lloyd George warmly resents the accusation—made, he implies, by many critics of the earlier volumes—that he has condemned every general, admiral, and statesman who took any part in the war. He offers a selection of the "military and naval chiefs and a few of the politicians" whom he "sought out for laudation." They make a varied list, not long, and I think one would be accurate in pointing out that the majority of the men named, although highly placed, were not at any time intrusted with tasks, either military or political, which could be described as of crucial importance. The unmistakable exceptions are Foch and Clemenceau. Mr. Lloyd George's admiration of Foch is unbounded, and a good part of the sixth volume is devoted to a demonstration of the claim that the Generalissimo's grand opportunity in 1918 was due to the Prime Minister's insistence upon the imperative necessity of unity of command through Foch. Then there is Clemenceau. We must suppose that Mr. Lloyd George looks upon him as both great and necessary. We are told among many other things that France was his sole concern. Yet that he was "an inexorable cynic" and a volcano of hatreds, while, surprisingly, Mr. Lloyd George seems to believe that he was the first to utter the bright saying, Might is right! "As long as France was victorious he did not worry in the least about the tribulations of any other country," and when he ended his career, adds this eulogist, he left France the most powerful state in Europe. Yes, sixteen years ago; but the results of Clemenceau's labors of hate are sickeningly evident today. After the measureless heroism of her sons through fifty sacrificial months France cannot have deserved the ruin brought upon her by this horrible old man.

The central villain of the two volumes is Douglas Haig, as every reader of the author's description of the "squalid tragedy" of Passchendaele must have expected. The denunciation is detailed, persistent, merciless, and it is rounded off in a final chapter dealing with Haig's Diaries and Mr. Duff Cooper's panegyric, a chapter which can have no parallel in the personal records of our age. Mr. Lloyd George sets out to destroy the last vestiges of Haig's reputation as commander-in-chief. He cannot make any reference to the strategy of the Flanders campaign save in words of withering contempt. He insists that Haig was obstructive and dishonest in the great business of the unity of command. He brings against him definite charges of both meanness and disloyalty. He makes Haig and Sir William Robertson, the imperial chief of staff, the main targets for his anger and scorn when building up his case against the professional-soldier caste, its training and mental equipment. In England, he reminds us, the army was never considered a career for talents, and "Robertson never saw a battle." Mr. Lloyd George's indictment, when completed by the riddling of Duff Cooper, will, I believe, be accepted as cruelly triumphant. It stands as a fully documented companion piece to the brilliant castigation of the army bunglers which came recently from England's most effective military historian and critic, Captain Liddell Hart, and I should be surprised if a rebuttal of any force can be made to Mr. Lloyd George's argument for control of the generals in war time by the civilian government.

Manifestly, however, all this is only a part of the question as it affects the all-powerful war Prime Minister, his policy and actions. Why, for instance, the reader will ask, did he continue Haig in the chief command? And why, when Robertson was removed, did he decide that the Cabinet was

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virtually without any choice in the appointment of his successor. Mr. Lloyd George indicates that they were compelled to choose the outrageous Sir Henry Wilson, notwithstanding their knowledge of his reckless ways, his habit of intrigue, his dangerous and malignant temper. Mr. Lloyd George reprints the memorandum of July, 1918, in which Henry Wilson surveyed the probabilities of the war. It was written at the turn of the tide, actually after the great counter-offensive had begun. A more grotesque document it would be impossible to imagine. One wonders whether anything comparable with it in folly and perversity could have been turned off by the silliest military "expert" on the daily press. But it was the work of the officer upon whom next after the commander-in-chief in the field the life of England and the fate of the British system depended. Mr. Lloyd George is unsurpassed when playing this game of documents.

I have touched, of course, upon no more than a trifling percentage of the controversial topics in these volumes. Virtually every page relating to the grave events of 1918 contains matter for debate. Inevitably Mr. Lloyd George restates and defends the points concerning himself in the tragic affair of the Fifth Army in March, and the Commons debate which arose out of Sir Frederick Maurice's famous letter to the press accusing the Prime Minister of lying to Parliament about the size of the British army in France. The debate was initiated by Asquith; Mr. Lloyd George says that it had important results upon the future of the Liberal Party. That is emphatically so; but he should have added the essential fact that when making the deal with his Tory allies for the calamitous election at the end of the war, he took pains to mark down every member of parliament who had voted for the Maurice motion. That maneuver broke the Liberal Party and made impossible the return of Mr. Lloyd George himself to power after his fall from office in 1922. The author is self-revealing in everything he has to say about President Wilson, and hardly less so in his account of the statement of war aims made by himself at the time of the Fourteen Points. Mr. Lloyd George avers that the terms he then outlined "were subsequently embodied in the Treaty of Versailles." In this speech he announced that the Allies were not fighting to destroy Austria-Hungary, and he affirmed that the insistence upon restitution was "no demand for a war indemnity such as that imposed on France by Germany in 1871." Suppose it had been, and had been relatively no more, what an ocean of trouble for Europe would have been saved! But at least, Mr. Lloyd George could explain that there was no indemnity set in the Treaty of Versailles.

S. K. RATCLIFFE

Gentlemen May Cry Peace . . .

VIEWED WITHOUT ALARM: EUROPE TODAY. By Walter Millis. Houghton Mifflin Company. $1.25.

THE word "smug" has such unpleasant connotations that one hesitates to apply it to a book which is obviously well-intentioned and which the author himself severely admits to be limited in scope. But what is one to say of Mr. Millis's armchair optimism? I agree with some of his conclusions. But what about what *is* happening in Europe today? Mr. Millis doesn't think that there is going to be a war. But a war *is* going on. Has Mr. Millis never heard of General Franco and his butchery in Spain? Does Mr. Millis not know that Italians and Germans are fighting today in what is already quite a nice little war? Mr. Millis is almost unbearably complacent about the factors, technical and diplomatic, which may keep the Germans from fighting. But the fact is that Germans *are* fighing at this very moment.

"Viewed Without Alarm" begins with an account of the author's recent brief trip across Europe from Paris to Moscow. He compares it with a similar trip from New York to North Dakota and summarizes all the nuisances the European traveler must undergo, the investigations of his passport, his cash and credit, and the literature he carries. This is amusing enough, but I think that Mr. Millis slightly exaggerates. I know that on many similar trips I wasn't awakened quite so often. (All you must do to avoid the money examination, even in Germany, is tip the *wagon-lit* conductor, so far as my experience goes.) However, Mr. Millis makes his point, and a valid one it is, that continental Europe is a prisoner of its frontiers. (On the other hand, the great lesson of the Spanish war is that frontiers, politically speaking, no longer correspond to geography. The German frontier just now is right at Malaga.)

Mr. Millis's impressions of Moscow are illuminating. Much of the inefficiency and red tape of the Soviet Union, he suggests, arise from Russian—that is, Oriental—rather than Marxist characteristics. Mr. Millis stops off in Germany and sees the autumn maneuvers of the Second Army near Bad Nauheim. This is brilliant reporting. Regiments, he says, were "just little strings of men, each a squad in single file led by its corporal (and looking for all the world like microphotographs . . . of certain types of disease germs), scattered all over the whole area." But from this and other items he draws what seems to me a dubious conclusion—that warfare is so experimental nowadays that no staff can be certain of victory, and that therefore the professional military folk are on the side of peace. Perhaps. But it isn't armies that make wars. No war ever comes just when a general staff wants it. The general staff in Italy desperately disapproved of the Abyssinian adventure.

The solidest part of Mr. Millis's book is about England. He gives a satisfying picture of the immense power of London —"still lying beneath her smoking chimneys along the Thames, still rich with her solid wealth, her immense accumulated equipment of technical skills and material facilities, her great social and political traditions scarcely touched as yet by all the storms of Continental dogma." London and Moscow are the two capitals of Europe, Mr. Millis feels. And by inference he concludes that the major European struggle, if it comes, will be between liberal democracy, represented by England, and the dictatorships; and here he seems to be thinking less of Nazi Germany, more of the Soviet Union.

The British have not committed themselves, Mr. Millis says, to the line they will take against Germany, assuming that the Germans are the power most likely to cause an immediate clash at arms. And this, according to Mr. Millis, is a very good thing: "Nobody, least of all the British, knows what they (the British) will do. I think it is a great aid to peace."

With all respect, I should like emphatically to disagree. British equivocation and shiftlessness are, it seems to me, very important factors that may tend to produce just what Mr. Millis doesn't want. As long as Hitler thinks that the British *will* remain neutral, he is encouraged to expand. Obviously a neutral Britain helps to give Germany a free hand on the Continent; conversely, an absolute knowledge—in advance—of what the British will and will not stand for would be the biggest possible deterrent to German flamboyance and German activism. If the Kaiser had known in advance that the British would fight for Belgium, there just possibly might not have been a war in 1914.

JOHN GUNTHER

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Discord in Experience

ON THIS ISLAND. By W. H. Auden. Random House. $1.50.

IN THIS new book Auden is concerned very largely with the experience of personal love. But Michael Roberts is correct in placing Auden among those poets who "deliberately leave a discord in experience which is to be removed only by action, not by an inner balancing of impulses." Almost every poem in this group expresses a "discord in experience" between the poet's inner desire for peace and his will-to-action. For Auden the only reality is the present—seen intellectually always as receding. Unlike Eliot, who compared past and present and thereby arrived at a concept of the absurdity of action and of belief in progress, Auden compares the present with a desired future and arrives at a concept of progress. Auden is, as it were, always on the rear observation platform of a train. Here he observes scenes of nature, of ordinary human life, receding so rapidly as to suggest a kaleidoscopic and somewhat terrifying journey toward a hoped-for future. Terror, ever present in such a sense of life, for Auden as for Malraux, points each personal experience toward a dramatic change into its opposite. Auden would reconcile continuity and discontinuity, continuity being biological and historical, discontinuity psychological or Freudian.

Auden is the finest of the younger English poets, and this is his best book. Completely within the English poetic tradition as to conventional form, imagery, and syntax, Auden, nevertheless, is new. He illustrates one way in which the poet may keep the newer psychological awarenesses and fuse these with the more recent historical determinism. Each characteristic symbol in these poems is so used that it may be dwarfed to signify the personal impulses or magnified to mean the radical's perspective of England or the world. The "island" is itself such a symbol. "Love" is another. But these symbols are not treated as they were in the earlier romantics. The early romantic poets drew realistic imagery from the personal responses and allowed it to emerge as an intermingling of the real and subjective, pointing not toward a will-to-action but toward a desire to dream. The last group of important poets in England, of which Auden is the best, select simple, descriptive imagery to express the personal impulse toward peace and then, as if by act of will, project this imagery, by distorting it and magnifying it, into a picture of a future, both horrible and desirable, toward which inevitably we move.

In almost every one of these new poems we are given first a simple, realistic scene or action representative of the old securities of life. Next the poet examines his own inner impulses and old methods of balancing them. Then, lastly, he sees these recede into the past as he moves rapidly into an unknown but willed future of action destructive of the old personal values. Moments of personal satisfaction are all charged with the possibility of death, not as chance or as the course of life, but as historically inevitable. Each simple family portrait or figure in a doorway may be, as it were, a spy and armed. A poem begins, for example, with the poet at his window, shifts into a prayer to the "Lords of Limit" (lords of endurance, personal and historical, to which each man in his isolated personal life must submit), and advances rapidly to a picture in which all familiar attachments are distorted and destroyed by revolutionary terror.

Auden's poetry expresses a pause between worlds. He uses no scientific, strained, or forced revolutionary imagery, but the simple and established imagery of the old order seen through a mind that realizes that this very imagery typifies a certain social era and is for us today comic, horrible, or prophetic. In this last book the poet has largely neglected satire—a vein in which he is very clever but not very important. These poems are personal lyrics, expressing the inevitable discord between the heart's necessities and the mind's convictions. In them the personal romantic moment is always absorbed by the will-to-action. In this clash between mind and emotions there is certainly some horror for the poet. There is, however, also hope. Even after turning to Iceland, the new source of the romantic imagery of pure escape for these younger poets (used as once the Alps were by the early romantics), Auden, in a new poem recently published in *Poetry,* not included in this book, finds that in this austere, remote island, too, "the world is, and the present, and the lie."

One might add that Auden has given up Gerard Hopkins's influence for A. E. Housman's. That stoic's classic simplicity and even his philosophy have somewhat affected these later poems. His influence, however is good. Auden is never imitative. He could sometimes be briefer—and more dramatic. He is sometimes just a shade too clever. But on the whole this last book proves him a poet to whom we must pay our respects.

EDA LOU WALTON

A Twelve-Cylinder Idyl

APRIL. A FABLE OF LOVE. By Vardis Fisher. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.

VARDIS FISHER'S narrative muse is like one of those racing cars that cannot go less than sixty miles an hour and are therefore useless on an ordinary highway. Merely to crank them is to create thunder; low speed for them is the speed of a hurricane; they are not to be thought of, as indeed they are never seen, save on Daytona Beach or the salt flats of Utah. There of course they may be magnificent, but it is scarcely proper to inquire whether they are real automobiles. To the extent that they cannot turn a corner and convey passengers and stop for gas they are of course preposterous; though on their native stretches they may suggest all that an automobile can be in terms of strength and speed.

Any novel by Mr. Fisher is incapable of slow motion or plain statement. He writes every sentence with all the might he possesses, for he is never calmer than his characters, all of whom are constantly excited to the point of explosion. The result is that he cannot be called a reviewer of life, or even a critic of it, since we have never been where he has been. But at the same time the experience of reading him can be very exhilarating, and can remind us that there is such a thing as pure literary power, as naked literary energy. The experience of reading his tetralogy about Vridar Hunter was bound to be more or lesss stupendous even if one deplored its excess of autobiography at the close. And this much slighter tale, in which Mr. Fisher so happily escapes from his private problems, has in its own queer way something titanic at the core.

With an almost monstrous exaggeration Mr. Fisher gives us the thoughts and feelings of a homely girl in Idaho whose only distinction, her imagination, is unappreciated by the barbarous society into which she has been born. Mr. Fisher exaggerates both the society and the girl; it becomes a circle of oversized apes and she in its center becomes a poetess eloquent beyond belief. June—or, as she renames herself, April—has the misfortune to contain within her bumpy, un-

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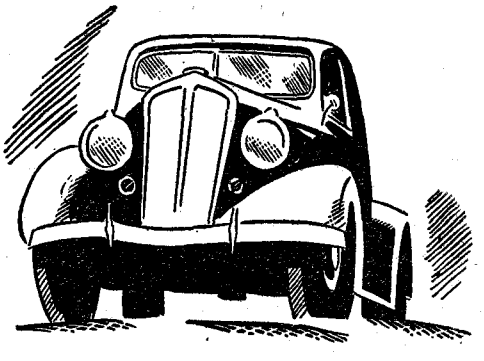

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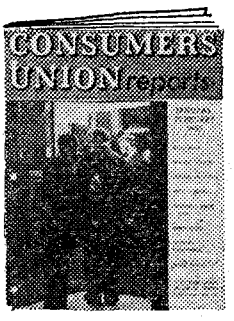

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attractive body not only a desire for love but a superior understanding of it; yet among the clowns of Antelope there is nobody to share this understanding with her, let alone marry her as she might like. All but one of the men are blind to what is within her, and he—poor old Sol Incham—miscalculates its intensity, supposing it to be something like his own simple, sentimental soul. As for April's mother, Mrs. Weeg, many years of reading paper-backed novels have rendered her virtually idiotic; she believes in love, but not in the realities of it which April is forced to worship on lonely walks up and down the beautiful mountain where her imagination has been nourished. The story, in so far as there is one, is of how June fiercely confronts her problem at last and blazes her way through the underbrush of indecision to a clearing where she achieves some kind of union with Sol.

The exaggeration of which I have spoken could in other hands than Mr. Fisher's have ruined this simple tale. In his hands, despite the temptation we occasionally feel to disbelieve everything and everybody, something else happens altogether. For as the personages grow in size, the space between them widens too, so that the tale takes on a certain abstract, primordial quality; we get love in the large, as one can fancy it actually to have moved the lives of the diplodocuses and brontosauruses which once towered above the earth's great trees. Doubtless we learn nothing from the spectacle, but the spectacle itself is in some gross way fine; particularly in view of the humor with which Mr. Fisher has handled it. There were moments of mad humor in his tetralogy which did not relieve the unwholesome tensions already set up, and indeed it was never quite clear that they were humor. Here it is very clear; Mr. Fisher is enjoying his vision, and the book in some mammoth way relishes the fact that it is being written. One may therefore welcome "April" for other reasons than that it is a good book of its kind; it is a sign that Mr. Fisher has loosened up, and consequently it is a promise of still better books to come.

MARK VAN DOREN

The Iron Maiden

PRIMITIVISM AND DECADENCE. A STUDY OF AMERICAN EXPERIMENTAL POETRY. By Yvor Winters. Arrow Editions. $2.50.

YVOR WINTERS, writing like a combination of a medieval scholastic and a New England divine, is a critic of a type that one has become accustomed to regard as practically extinct. Yet it is a type that is always with us—through innumerable changes of disguise. Although he would doubtless shudder at the comparison, the distortions effected by his method are not fundamentally unlike those of the extreme left in current criticism—the writings of someone like Granville Hicks, for example. What his little volume most generally illustrates, as a matter of fact, is the characteristic defect of any critical method too literally applied: the substitution of a self-propelling system of logic for that ever more supple cooperation of intelligence and sensibility required in genuine interpretation. Both intelligence and sensibility are put to rout before the antics of a distinctly tipsy intellect. Mr. Winters, the author of some charming lyrics in the imagist manner, is not without sensibility, and there are moments of the finest intelligence in these pages. But there are also moments when they achieve what Ezra Pound has described as "the nadir of solemn and elaborate imbecility." It is intellect, and nothing else, that speaks when we are told that such feebly endowed traditionalists as T. Sturge Moore and Robert Bridges are more important poets than Yeats, Eliot, Crane, Stevens, and certain other contemporaries not even mentioned. It is again an abuse of intellect that leads to the conclusion that one of W. C. Williams's narrative pieces is "superior in all likelihood to any other prose of our time," and that Bridges's daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Daryush, is "one of the few great poets living." These claims are rendered absurd not through any preconceived judgments of the reader but through the very evidences offered in their support. The mistake is to quote the specimens by Moore and Bridges and Mrs. Daryush, for the reader is then forced to measure his own perception against Mr. Winters's logic, and the result is disastrous. But it is perhaps foolish to quarrel with these particular judgments when the sophistry behind all of them is so manifest.

Evidently Mr. Winters began with a temperamental distaste for the general atmosphere of distress, the hectic experimentation with forms and with style, that has characerized so much contemporary verse. But to this situation he responded with that mechanism of the mind which consists in reacting to any phenomenon by celebrating its opposite. If Hart Crane was a disorderly sort of poet, then Bridges is a model to be emulated. If free verse has led to some unfortunate formal consequences, it follows that poetry must return to the strictest metrical conventions. (The book closes with a long dissertation on meter.) The assumption is made that the attainment of order or form has nothing directly to do with the experience with which literature has to deal. Instead of seeking in contemporary experience a possible explanation for the formal vicissitudes of contemporary verse, Mr. Winters directs himself to charges of an almost universal and wholly inexplicable wilfulness on the part of the poets themselves. For him poetry is not something subject to the main philosophical, ethical, and social buffetings of an age. It is an independent formal discipline; and form itself is finally represented as a kind of Iron Maiden, whose custodians are Churchill, Pope, Gay, Voltaire, and, presumably, Mrs. Daryush. In short, he would reform poetry by having it lift itself by its own boot straps.

Mr. Winters is narrow, dogmatic, parochial; and these are all the defects of his method. But it would be unjust not to mention the virtues of these defects: the sharpening of focus on important problems, the formulation of useful distinctions, and the construction of definitions that at least provide a springboard for discussion. For the reader already familiar with the field the book will be full of incidental rewards; but for anyone else it is likely to prove an unreliable and mischievous guide.

WILLIAM TROY

Biography of a River

THE NILE: THE LIFE-STORY OF A RIVER. By Emil Ludwig. Translated by Mary H. Lindsay. The Viking Press. $5.

IN SPITE of a few lush passages, to be expected from a man who has made his fame by popular biographies, in spite of certain strongly individual judgments which will find objectors, this is a magnificent book. In the main Ludwig writes a prose that is vivid, forceful, and packed with information. Like Gibbon he has often summarized in a paragraph the knowledge gained from many books.

He begins with the rise of the White Nile in the Mountains of the Moon near Lake Victoria, a beautiful inland sea larger than Switzerland, and of the Blue Nile near Lake Tana.

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Both lakes were unknown to the Pharaohs; both have recently figured in international news. Is Ludwig heaping new confusion on old by thus reversing accustomed chronology, by beginning with the present day, bringing us after two hundred pages to the great story of Chinese Gordon at Khartoum and a little later to Colonel Marchand's romantic and tremendous adventure at Fashoda, reaching the Pharaohs only in the latter half of the book, and then taking up the conquering nations in the Delta, the Persians, Assyrians, Greeks, Romans, Turks, the Mamelukes, the emerging Egyptian state, the English Protectorate, King Fuad? Not at all. The great story achieves a unity it has never been given before. Whoever would understand the full significance of the present attempts of the Egyptians to establish an independent state, of Mussolini to conquer Abyssinia, of England to block him, of all the European nations to seize a part of Africa, had best begin with Ludwig at the sources of the Nile.

"The river has been bridged in the first moments of its life: a short distance downstream a gray iron bridge bears the train which connects the mighty lake with the Indian Ocean." On either side this train is jungle which Ludwig describes with delightful particularity. "From out the carmine convolvulus that muffles up the mimosa the turquoise-blue kingfisher, hanging close above the water, peers motionless, spying down to snatch the fish. Rocking to and fro on the flexible points of the palm-fans are the nests of the weaver-birds, who at these airiest points can elude the grasp of the monkeys and snakes." With the same vivid precision he describes the vegetation of the country, and its natives—the pigmies who dwell on the slopes of the Mountains of the Moon, the tall Dinkas, the cannibals, the Bongo, the Madi, the Banjoro, the Shilluks.

From its earliest history the wealth of the Nile has been seized by the few, who have oppressed the many by their manifold exactions. Conquerors have differed only in their methods of grinding down the poor. But they never reached these upper regions of the river. Ludwig shows Uganda as an earthly paradise before the whites first came eighty years ago to enslave the natives by offering them wages. "The first month of the year is the month of sowing," so a popular saying goes, "the others are for eating." Now the natives labor all the year for the English and eat no more than before.

But the English have done more for Africa than bring it the new slavery of the wage system. Ludwig's account of their creative accomplishments, their rapacities, their justice, their pride of race, is a model of impartial, discerning writing. In Cairo the sons of peasants are being educated at Gordon College. They will soon take their own back, he prophesies, and "the rise of the Sudan will have changed the fate of Egypt and even of Abyssinia by the end of the twentieth century."

Throughout Ludwig is more concerned with the fellah than with his numerous conquerors. "The boy is begotten," he quotes a popular rhyme, "only to be torn from his mother's arms. When he is grown to manhood his bones are broken." Not until the last century have real leaders of the people appeared. Arabi and Zaghul are dead, but clearly Ludwig hopes that soon for the first time in their history the Egyptian workers will come into their own. Yet his book abounds in material that should forewarn the social reformer. The greatest exploitation in all this long history of rapacity fell upon the people after the Christians, in pursuit of their absolute God, had broken down the traditional government and, occupied with arguing the difference between "homoousian" and "homoiousian," had left the country defenseless before the Mohammedans.

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Pushkin the Man

PUSHKIN. By Ernest J. Simmons. Harvard University Press. $4.

HERE is an ample chronicle of the works and, more especially, the days of the man who is being commemorated, a hundred years after his death, as the national poet of Russia and the tutelary genius of its literature. The book has considerable merit and indeed supersedes the only existing biography of Pushkin in English, that by D. S. Mirsky. It is on the whole a scholarly performance, and not without lively moments, for Pushkin's story is quick with human interest. These pages allow one to glimpse the precocious child, the giddy youth parading a cynicism which hides his sensitiveness, and at last to know the mature man, passionate, impulsive, outgoing, keen. Although the author is aware of his hero's stature, he makes no attempt to glorify the poet by ignoring the weaknesses of the man. Sufficient space is accorded his amorous experiences, which were legion and not seldom tawdry, the matter being treated with candor that avoids both prudishness and pruriency. One comes to perceive the roots of his tragic end both in the outward circumstances of his life and in the nature of his personality.

Repeatedly Mr. Simmons returns to the question, now so timely, of Pushkin's political and social views. He makes it plain that although Pushkin hated oppression and obscurantism and was, during most of his short life, a political suspect, he was not a revolutionist either by temperament or conviction. In his youth he had radical sympathies, and indeed his civic lyrics contributed to the movement which culminated in the Decembrists' attempts to overthrow the autocracy. After, if not because of, the failure of that attempt, his outlook was that of a mild liberal with a lingering faith in reforms from above and a dread of a popular rising. His art, though it evinces a concern with the rebellious spirit, on the whole expresses an attitude of acquiescence. It is perhaps not without significance that, as a Russian critic has recently observed, Pushkin's prestige has not been at its highest during the critical periods of Russian history, so that his immense vogue at present may be another sign that the country is entering upon an organic phase of development. One must recognize, however, that his work manifests a sympathy with the common man and a humane quality which must endear him to a society that seeks to establish itself upon a broad democratic base.

"A biographer," writes Mr. Simmons, "must study Pushkin as a man, as a poet, and as an historical figure." The poet and the historical figure fare less well in this account, however, than does the man. The comment on the writings is meager, conventional, occasionally feeble, and is introduced into the narrative in a somewhat mechanical fashion. Problems relating to the genesis and technique of the works are either disregarded or slurred over. "The Captain's Daughter," Pushkin's main prose work and the one by which he is best known to the outside world (there are over a dozen versions of it in English alone), is dismissed in some fourteen rather inadequate lines. The author gives more attention, and justly, to Pushkin's verse than to his prose, but unfortunately he yields to the natural temptation of backing up his superlatives by citing rhymed English translations. The best of these versions are apt to leave the reader cold. Some of them, notably the lines on page 313, those on page 325, and the rendering of the exquisite, profoundly moving lyric " 'Tis time, my friend," indicate that the translator failed to understand certain of the Russian phrases. One could more readily forgive Mr. Simmons had there not been available translations closer to the

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spirit and the letter of the original. A single example is that noble lyric, "Message to Siberia," admirably done into English verse by Max Eastman some years ago. The stanzas presented are so faulty that one is surprised to find them here. Indeed, after reading this volume, the reader with no knowledge of Russian will still have to take on trust Pushkin's indubitable greatness as a poet.

It belonged to his genius to use the stuff of the life around him as the material of his art, but in doing so he availed himself of the values that he found both in the classical tradition that he inherited and in the romantic influences of his own day. Furthermore, he completed the labor begun a century earlier of balancing the three elements of the Russian language —the Slavonic of the church books, the vernacular, and the borrowings from the West—thus implementing the work of his successors with a strong and pliant tool. He stood on the threshold of an age in which Russia, the period of its apprenticeship over, made an original contribution to Western culture. In many ways his writings prefigure the performance of the men who came after him. Mr. Simmons mentions these points, but he does not elaborate them sufficiently to bring into focus Pushkin as "an historical figure." In fine, he has not accomplished the ambitious task he set himself, but has provided an introduction to Pushkin which is biography in the narrower sense of the word. It is to be hoped that the book will help to stimulate an interest in Pushkin outlasting the centenary celebrations.

AVRAHM YARMOLINSKY

American Peace Movement

PEACE OR WAR. THE AMERICAN STRUGGLE 1636-1936. By Merle Curti. W. W. Norton and Company. $3.

THE complete history of the American peace movement is still to be written. Neither Professor Curti's volume nor the similar one by Devere Allen wholly covers the field. Mr. Allen added to his history an interpretation of the present movement and its future; Professor Curti has analyzed the spirit and philosophy of the peace movement. This is the more rewarding portion of his book. He properly records the inconsistencies of some of those who advocated non-resistance when the Civil War came, and could well have added the story of the many who abandoned their convictions in the war to safeguard democracy. He puts his finger on a genuine weakness of the peace movement when he says that "most friends of peace, coming from the middle classes, have naturally accepted the existing order and have not seen the threats to peace inherent in it." He is aware that the pioneers in the movement failed to respond to the pleas of early labor leaders, and he notes the deafness of latter-day peace advocates to the argument that peace cannot come as long as our whole society is built on the desire for profits. Professor Curti is certain that a continuation of the "peace policies and tactics of the past will bring diminishing returns" and that the present economic and social order will "have to be replaced by one more definitely collectivistic and democratic."

Professor Curti also sees that the peace movement has suffered from internal conflict, duplication of effort, and ineffective marshaling of its forces. He might have added from the incessant compromising of many individuals and societies, as when the New York Peace Society named to its Board of Directors the head of the Navy League, generals, and admirals, and supported a proposal for more battleships for the United States navy. The folly of a pseudo-devotion to peace like this is obvious. It has naturally created in the

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public mind a belief that the peace movement is none too sincere and that it will always collapse in the face of a war.

On the whole Professor Curti's book is disappointing. He has brought valuable material together, but his narrative is full of omissions and seems to lack continuity and directness. Opinions must, of course, differ as to the amount of space to be given to any phase of a subject when the author is limited to one moderate-sized volume. It does seem odd, however, that only thirty pages are given to all the peace pioneers and their work prior to 1861. The result is a failure adequately to portray such men as Elihu Burritt and William Ladd, and a slighting of the work of the Garrisonian Non-Resistants to the extent that their remarkable three-day convention in Boston, September 18-20, 1838, is not even mentioned. Since Leo Tolstoy declared that he got his non-resistant ideas from Garrison, and Gandhi states that he took his from Tolstoy, it seems not unreasonable to say that the short-lived American Non-Resistant movement and its shorter-lived organ merited at least a recording of their existence by Professor Curti. Similarly the treatment of the Quakers and especially of their role in the Civil and the World War is scarcely adequate. Again, there is no complete presentation of the circumstances leading up to the war with Spain, or of the admirable part played by many newspapers in the furthering of peace. Professor Curti has labored hard, but defects of style and arrangement militate against the value of the book.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

For the Defense

BERNARD SHAW, FRANK HARRIS, AND OSCAR WILDE. By Robert Harborough Sherard. With a Preface by Lord Alfred Douglas. The Greystone Press. $3.50.

THIRTY-SIX years after Oscar Wilde's death, and despite a mounting pile of intimate documents, it seems as difficult as ever to know the truth about his life. Each witness in this distressing case contradicts his predecessor, and not infrequently himself. Confessions and retractions, forgeries, lawsuit on lawsuit, this seems to be the natural atmosphere of the Wilde coterie—and unfortunately Frank Harris's "Oscar Wilde" is hardly the exception to this rule. Hailed in 1916 with extravagant praise by such critics as Bernard Shaw, H. L. Mencken, Upton Sinclair, and even by the restrained Ernst Paulus Bendz writing in the restrained *Englische Studien,* Harris's biography has lost by now its original stature. Its emphasis on the bacchanalian aspects of Wilde's history, its engaging absurdities, its continual feeding of Wilde to the flames of Harris's egotheism, have rendered suspect even those passages which contain authentic information and shrewd insight. In this sense Mr. Sherard's study was hardly necessary; nevertheless, as a sort of labor of hate, he has compiled here a detailed record of Harris's probable fictions and plagiarisms. But Mr. Sherard weakens an eminently sound argument by his garrulity and painful whimsicality, his lack of literary discrimination; he expatiates on Harris's minor inaccuracies, he juxtaposes incontestable and frail evidence, he bears a childish animosity toward Harris and Bernard Shaw. And it must be remembered that Mr. Sherard, in the course of his long career as a Wilde apologist, has probably misrepresented as many facts in order to exculpate the unhappy Wilde as Harris has to incriminate him—and without Harris's talent.

MAXWELL GEISMAR

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DRAMA

The Deaths of Kings

IT HAS been shrewdly said that a really great and successful writer must have a good deal of talent as well as a good deal of genius. That means, I take it, that the facility and ease which may seem so little important when they constitute the whole of an artistic equipment are nevertheless indispensable if genius is to be rendered fully effective, and that Shakespeare, for example, would not be universally recognized as the supreme example of greatness in literature if he had not been, incidentally, perfect master of all the minor ingeniosities which taken by themselves are no adequate measure of his stature as a writer.

But it has not, so far as I know, ever been pointed out that this fact also supplies the reason why these really great writers are often misjudged in their own time and put on the same level as lesser men who approach them in talent without having any genius at all. Time was necessary before it could be universally agreed that Shakespeare was more than a popular entertainer, just as, to take a more recent example, Dickens was conventionally placed below Thackeray largely because the exuberance of his talent aroused doubt about his solider virtues even in minds which perceived them without quite daring to trust their perceptions. Genius which comes rough and without the art to recommend itself we recognize easily if we are able to recognize it at all, because, if we are pleased, we know that it can be for the one reason alone. But art that is wholly amiable is often, like men or women who are the same, unjustly suspect, for the simple reason that we are so often not quite sure whether we are being legitimately charmed or only seduced. Even this, alas, is not the only difficulty, for the danger is double-edged, and the writer whose talents are so conspicuous that we tend to overlook his genius is rather less common than his false twin whose talents win a reputation which only time can reduce to its proper proportions.

This long preamble is in itself, I fear, sufficient indication of the extent to which I am personally unsure in my judgment of Maxwell Anderson, whose third play of the season, "The Masque of Kings," has just been produced by the Theater Guild at the Shubert Theater. His facility and his talent are no less than phenomenal; that he is, at the very least, one of the two or three most interesting American playwrights of our generation could hardly be doubted; and yet I must frankly confess that even now, more than a dozen years after I saw his first play, I still have no settled judgment upon him so far as concerns the question whether his talents lead his admirers to overestimate his solid worth or whether those who take the easier way are wrong in assuming that facility is being mistaken for greatness.

Nor does the new play give me greater assurance. Theatrically it is, I think, extraordinarily effective, and I know of no other living playwright who could refurbish the familiar romance of splendid courts and sinister intrigues as successfully as Mr. Anderson does in this possible version of the events which led up to the finding of Prince Rudolph of Austria dead in the hunting lodge at Mayerling. That he has thoroughly mastered the grand romantic manner in so far as its purely theatrical aspects are concerned seems to me

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beyond dispute. When one adds that the play has been given brilliant performance by a superb cast of actors including Henry Hull, Dudley Digges, Pauline Frederick, Glen Anders, and Margo, it ought to be plain enough how difficult it is to be sure that all these things are not alone sufficient to account for the effect produced. Yet Mr. Anderson has an important theme which he has developed in eloquent language. Prince Rudolph, having dreamed of a just government established upon revolution, abdicates before he has been crowned:

> To the old and dying
> I leave their dying kingdoms to be plowed
> By the new sowers of death—fools like myself
> Who rush themselves to power to set men free
> And hold themselves in power by killing men,
> As time was, as time will be, time out of mind
> Unto this last, forever.

With the exception of "Winterset," "The Masque of Kings" is, I think the best of Mr. Anderson's tragic plays written since he abandoned naturalism for poetic drama, and it is inferior to "Winterset" chiefly because it is less startlingly original in both theme and manner. And though I must persist to the end in shirking the duty of final judgment I shall not do it without adding that there is no contemporary playwright to one of whose new plays I go with greater anticipation. There are half a dozen about whom I know with assurance satisfactory to myself exactly what I shall think. I do not know yet how much my pleasure in Mr. Anderson is due to the fact that I am being carried away; how much to the fact that I am being taken in.

Only lack of space prevents me from enlarging to an equal extent upon the merits of Maurice Evans's production of "King Richard II," which is beautifully staged at the St. James Theater and acted with a fine sense of the play's peculiar values. I dare say that it had for Shakespeare's contemporaries an emotional significance which it has to a large extent lost, that for them the spectacle of a weak king wallowing luxuriously in his own weakness had a sort of mystic horror which we feel but dimly. What remains—the brilliant portrait of a narcissist perennially occupied with what he calls "the lamentable tale of me"—is still one of the most fascinating of all "sad stories of the deaths of kings." This production should, and I think will, very considerably prosper the new popular interest in Shakespeare on the stage.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

To the season's gallery of the great and the near-great, add "Frederika" (Imperial), purporting to depict the passions and pastimes of Wolfgang von Goethe—with music by Franz Lehar and as much of the poet as Dennis King can salvage in a powdered peruke and a drawing-room full of prisms. Under the circumstances too much cannot be expected of the libretto, and "Frederika," in spite of the presence of Ernest Truex and lavish upholstering on the part of Hassard Short, does not improve upon the dismal tradition to which the operetta falls heir. Fortunately, there is an abundance of charming tunes at the disposal of Mr. King and Miss Helen Gleason (Frederika), and both not only make effective use of the melodies, with the aid of choruses in spun sugar, but handsomely complement each other in general good looks and quality of voice. The author of "Faust" may revolve in his grave to discover himself in 1937 reduced to a sequence of ballads sung, in the parlance of the playbill, by "Goethe and girls," but rarely have the tunes been pleasanter or the girls more ornamental.

B. B.

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RECORDS

AFTER many years of the customary snobbish attitude toward Verdi, based on the customary knowledge of the Anvil Chorus and "La donna è mobile," I heard "Otello" and "Falstaff" and was amazed. And having begun with his masterworks I had the pleasure of discovering their qualities, subsequently, in "Aida," in "La Traviata," in "Rigoletto," in "Il Trovatore." The dramatic force of the earlier music is exciting even to a person who doesn't know what it is about; but with this force and occasional crudity in an opera like "Rigoletto" there is the delicacy that is to be heard in "Falstaff." And the value of the music comes not only from the extraordinary skill and musical talent for the specific purpose, but as much from the wonderful honesty and unpretentiousness that also are involved.

In Columbia's set of "Rigoletto" (15 records, $22.50) the Duke (Dino Borgioli) and Gilda (Mercedes Caspir) are none too good, but Riccardo Stracciari is a magnificent-voiced Rigoletto, other parts are sung very much as they would be at the Metropolitan, chorus and orchestra are good, and Molajoli's conducting is excellent. Recording is good, and the set comes with a complete text in Italian and English.

Ernest Newman once pointed out the inadequacy of most of the musical treatments of Goethe's "Faust," but had high praise for Liszt's "Faust" Symphony; and rehearing the work I have been impressed by the poetic and musical quality of much of it, though it is by no means without its banal and inflated moments. I owe the rehearing to Columbia's set (7 records, $10.50), which offers an excellent performance by the Grand Orchestre Philharmonique of Paris, the D'Alexis Vlassoff Russian Choir, and the tenor Villabella. Once the grooves are cleaned out, the set also offers orchestral recording that is among the finest of the year in its clarity, spaciousness, and fidelity to timbre.

Yella Pessl's playing of the harpsichord on Columbia records of Bach's Toccata in D (3 sides of 2 records, $3) continues to be heavily and unrelievedly emphatic. Moreover, it is less well recorded than some of her earlier performances; and even these are not as well recorded as Kirkpatrick's on Musicraft records.

Musicraft will, I am sure, want to improve the surface and stock of its records. What with the thinness of its first records and the brittleness of the stock, it was possible for one to crack them merely by waving them in the air. As for the surface, on a Scott machine equipped with an Astatic crystal pick-up it was a little quieter than Victor's surface on the first side of the Toscanini Beethoven Seventh, and a little less quiet than Victor's surface on the first side of the Toscanini "Italians in Algiers"; on a Panharmonic equipped with an Audak magnetic pick-up it was much less quiet than the "Italians in Algiers." On the Scott the noise of the Musicraft surface was not disturbing; on the Panharmonic it was more acute and obtrusive. What this demonstrates is the important fact that the result one gets with a record varies appreciably with every instrument the record is played on.

Columbia, for no reason that I can discover, offers a new set (5 records, $7.50) of Beethoven's Quartet Opus 132, made by the Lener String Quartet. I find the performance inferior in style to that of the London Quartet on the older set; and it is murkily recorded.

B. H. HAGGIN

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Letters to the Editors

Evidence Is Essential

Dear Sirs: I want to protest against your editorial, Behind the Moscow Trials.

1. It attempts, through a very superficial comparison of the Russian-European and the Anglo-Saxon concepts of due process, to defend the lack of evidence in Moscow. But who cares about differences in method when the essential purpose of all juridical systems is absolutely the same: to find the truth and to approximate justice! I was brought up not in the Anglo-Saxon but in the European concept, and I too was "profoundly disturbed by the prosecution's failure to produce and publish evidence." One has only to compare the Moscow trial with the Reichstag-fire trial, to see that there is no barrier against the prosecutor's introducing evidence in open court for weeks and weeks, whether the defendants confess or not, and whether the evidence is worth a nickel or not. No, another method of procedure can never be used to excuse the lack of evidence!

2. The editorial discusses all kinds of implications which, allegedly, make the confessions sound true. Then it admits that the confessions of conspiracy with the fascists are "most difficult of belief," but tries to overcome this difficulty by suspending judgment for the next hundred years. But if you suspend judgment on the decisive accusation in a political trial, how can you judge at all? The really objective observer will suspend all judgment, and demand evidence again and again.

3. The editorial completely ignores the fact that one defendant in the trials did not confess; that he contradicts all the confessions. Not even his name is mentioned in three and half columns. It happens to be the name not only of the chief defendant but also of a prominent contributor to *The Nation,* Leon Trotsky. Would it not have been fair to give him at least the benefit of any reasonable doubt? Or does the editorial writer, in his futile longing to understand the Moscow juridical procedure, abandon this Anglo-Saxon feature of due process?

There must be some explanation for your editorial. Behind Behind the Moscow Trials is at best the fear and horror which certain liberal idealists feel when brought face to face with cruel expressions of moving history. Everything seemed to be so fine and consoling in Russia, a country to which the weak pessimist could look and become optimistic. And now, out of a clear sky, these trials —no, let's draw a curtain over them! Every human being has a right to feel low from time to time, and it is the legitimate right of *The Nation* to print occasionally an outstanding piece of defeatism. But *The Nation* should call it that.

Yes, behind the Moscow trials are political realities, and it is *The Nation's* proper function to point them out. There would be even no objection to "political and emotional commitments"—indeed, they would be easier to forgive than your editorial's psuedo-objectivity. If Stalin has to get rid of his opponents and gets rid of them, that is historical weather-news. You can be sorry it rains, but it may be good for the fields. This would be a cheap but possible argument in the realm of political ethics. To say it does not rain because you have no umbrella is grotesque.

FRANZ HOELLERING

New York, February 8

Congratulations

Dear Sirs: May I have the pleasure of complimenting you on your editorial on the Moscow trials in the February 6 *Nation?*

Your paragraph the week before was open to serious criticism. Naturally, then, I welcome its sequel, which I believe is in the best *Nation* tradition of critical understanding and sympathy.

SIDNEY L. JACKSON

Mt. Vernon, N. Y., February 7

Protecting Slanderers

Dear Sirs: The bill introduced in Congress by Representative Curley of New York to protect newspaper publishers and writers against contempt-of-court proceedings for refusal to give the source of information alleged to be "confidential" should be entitled "a bill to protect fakers, slanderers, and libelers." Anyone familiar with the record of our sensation-creating newspapers knows that the courts have been altogether too lenient with those contemptible character assassins, who always, when cornered, fall back on the plea: "Sources of information confidential." The sentencing to jail for thirty days of a Hearst reporter was a timely climax to the scandal-mongering gentry who make money by concocting fakes that help sell the newspapers to the credulous public.

If the Curley bill becomes law there will be opened up still wider fields for the professional blackmailers, who will be able to extort hush money from innocent persons who are afraid of the publicity that can easily be given to all sorts of monstrous charges without the accusers being called upon for proofs of their inventions. I hope that your readers will write to their Representatives in Congress, urging them to aid in defeating this bill.

WHIDDEN GRAHAM

New York, February 1

Correction

[In our issue of January 23 the name of B. C. Place was erroneously included in a list of General Motors executives receiving $50,000 or more. The figure opposite Mr. Place's name was correct but his income is derived from the Gagnier Fiber Products Company of Detroit. All the figures were taken from the House Ways and Means Committee's report on salaries, commisssions, and bonuses over $15,000 in 1935. The list being alphabetically arranged, the data on the General Motors Corporation appeared almost directly below those pertaining to the Gagnier Company, with which Mr. Place is connected. Our compiler inadvertently included the name of Mr. Place among the executives of General Motors. We are extremely sorry for the error, which was quite unintentional on our part and on the part of our compiler.—EDITORS THE NATION.]

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